ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON

Mr. THO. CHUBB'S DISCOURSE on MIRACLES,

Considered as EVIDENCES to prove the divine original of a Revelation.

Wherein is attempted to be shewn,

That he has greatly mistaken the *kind* and *degree* of evidence—that his *hypothesis* is not consistent with itself; and so unable to overthrow, or even *weaken* the evidence given to the *Christian Revelation*, by miracles, if so applied.

To which is addded,

An APPENDIX, containing Dr. TURNBULL's Queries, which are humbly offered to the serious consideration of all who pretend to be FREE-THINKERS.

Is there no such thing as truth, *because the question has been put,* What is truth?

Is there no such thing as right reason, *because men have maintained infinite absurdities and contradictions about every thing?*

Have not some that pretend to be mathematicians *disputed about the first principles of* geometry?

In short, what is there that minute philosophers *have not held, to the subversion of* human knowledge, *and destruction of all science?* Dr. SYKES's Connexion, &c. p. 285, 286.

By *CALEB FLEMING.*

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TO

Mr. THO. CHUBB.

The INTRODUCTION.

SIR,

I Have with care attended to your *Diſcourſe on Miracles*, and as far as I know myſelf, have animadverted upon your *hypotheſis*, with that impartial regard to Truth, which becomes a lover of it.—You have well obſerved, "that *controverſies* in matters of *religion*, when managed with "that *fairneſs* and *good humour* as they ought, have "this advantage ariſing from them, that they give "occaſion for men's reaſoning faculties to be exerciſed with much more *care* and *attention* than "otherwiſe they would be. Which *fairneſs* and "*good humour* in controverſy, greatly tends to check "and reſtrain the growth of bigotry and ſuperſtition, which through men's *inattention* are apt to "prevail in the world." I likewiſe agree with you, in thinking, "that the points controverted, are likewiſe very often ſet in a much *clearer* light by this "means, and the way to truth rendered more *eaſy*, "by a removal of thoſe *difficulties* and *objections* "which are bars to men's receiving it."

FARTHER, I own myſelf of the number of thoſe who wiſh "that all reſtraints upon men's enquiries "were removed, and that all men were at *full liber-*

" *ty* to offer their thoughts and their objections *freely*
" upon every queſtion with which religion is con-
" cerned; this being moſt *fair* and *equitable* in itſelf,
" and likewiſe, the moſt ſure and certain way for a
" religion which is *well-grounded*, to be generally
" received, and thereby, to be more thoroughly
" eſtabliſhed."

THIS part of your preface, Sir, I could not forbear tranſcribing, as it expreſſes the ſenſe I have of *religious liberty*; and am fully perſuaded, that ſhould we ſeparate this *extent of freedom* from our Idea of religion, and the method of promoting and propagating it, we muſt have a very *jejune* and *ſtarved* notion of it! Religion being in its own nature a *perſonal* thing; nor can bear any *compulſion* or *reſtraint*. The underſtanding muſt have ſufficient light for conviction; the object of knowledge muſt appear ſo amiable and worthy of regard as to engage the affection and choice, otherwiſe, it is not religion but ſomething elſe. *Beſides*, as religion imports the *ſenſe* which the creature has of obligation to his Maker; to recommend or attempt to promote it, by throwing in *temporary rewards* or *diſcouragements*, is to divert the mind from regarding that obligation in which religion conſiſts; it does this, as it is a making the *creature*, and not the CREATOR, the object of religious regard.

BUT when we are pleading in behalf of *Liberty*, and *Truth*, it will be required of us, that we uſe *great care* and be very *circumſpect* leſt we betray any ſort or degree of falſehood in our own words or actions. Whether you have not unhappily tranſgreſſed the laws of Truth, in aſſerting, *p.* 5. of your preface, *that you have taken a view of the ſubject conſidered ſimply in itſelf, without any view or regard to any particular revelation, or to any particular miracle, wrought, or ſuppoſed to be wrought, in favour of the divinity of any revelation.*—Whether there be not ſome *exceſs* in this declaration, I ſhall appeal to your own

own breaſt, by ſetting before you ſome paſſages in your *Diſcourſe on Miracles*.—Pray turn to *p.* 15, 16, 17. and obſerve how you have attempted to ſhew we cannot prove, that *the raiſing a dead perſon to life, is a work above the natural ability or inherent power of any created being*—you have done this, not barely by aſſerting, *that a ſkilful ſurgeon or phyſician, by a timely interpoſition has ſometimes* prevented *death, by removing a diſorder which otherwiſe would ſpeedily and unavoidably have ended in it*—and *that ſometimes, by a timely and proper application from a ſkilful perſon, life has been* reſtored *after a ſhort ceſſation*; but you have added, an expreſs reference *to the hiſtory of the deliverance of the children of Iſrael from Egyptian bondage; where we have an account, that the magicians, by their enchantments, that is, (as it is commonly underſtood) by a power derived from evil ſpirits, turned their dead rods into ſerpents, that is, into living, active beings, which ſerpents are known and allowed to be.*

FROM this you have reaſoned, and have declared, that *if we admit, as true, what is recorded, as done, by the* magicians *of* Egypt, *in turning* dead rods *into* ſerpents, *then the* probability *will be on the* affirmative ſide of the queſtion.

NOW if this IVth Section ſtands for any thing, or be allowed to be a part of the *Diſcourſe on Miracles*, then *you have not taken a view of the ſubject conſidered ſimply in itſelf, without any view or regard to any particular revelation, or to any particular miracle wrought, or ſuppoſed to be wrought, in favour of the divinity of any revelation.*

PERHAPS it may be replied, that you have not violated or broken your word; foraſmuch as the *magicians* turning their dead rods into ſerpents, was neither a miracle, wrought, or ſuppoſed to be wrought, *in favour* of the divinity of any revelation.

I GRANT it; and yet imagine, you have not taken a view of the ſubject conſidered *ſimply* in itſelf; but muſt have recourſe to the *credit* of the Sacred

Hiſtory, for ſupporting your conſequences, which are drawn from the *magicians* turning their *dead rods* into ſerpents.

AGAIN, be pleaſed to turn to the narrative you have taken out of *Lacy*'s book, entitled, *A Cry from the deſert*, from *p.* 83 to 87 incluſive; and obſerve what uſe you have made of it:—you muſt own, that you have oppoſed the evidences of that pretended Miracle to the evidences of *Chriſt's reſurrection*; and muſt be underſtood, by any reader who would underſtand you, to prefer the teſtimony given by *Cavalier*, *Fage*, and *Marion*,* to *Simon*, *Andrew*, and *Philip*, and the circumſtances attending thoſe miracles in the *Sevennes*, as riſing higher in their demand of credit than thoſe attending the hiſtory of Jeſus; inaſmuch, as in the former caſe, the *records* were made within *four* years after the facts were tranſacted.—The fact, *i. e.* the grand one mentioned in *Lacy*'s narrative, *is of ſuch a nature*, p. 88. *as ſeems to be above, and therefore not the produce of* JUGGLE *or* SLEIGHT *of hand. The miracle was performed before a great number of* witneſſes, *by computation not leſs than* one thouſand. *Theſe witneſſes were perſons who ſuffered* perſecution *for the ſake of their religion*; *perſons who were eminent for their* great piety, *or, at leaſt, for their being frequent in thoſe exerciſes which are made the outward ſigns and tokens of it*; *perſons of reputed* honeſty *and* integrity, *and who could not poſſibly have any* worldly advantages—who lived under a Government *that greatly oppoſed that* NEW DISPENSATION *they were believers in, and that* NEW MINISTRY *they attended upon.—Again*, its

* *N. B.* It is pity but Mr. *Chubb* had carefully examined into the *nature* of this pretended miracle, and ſhewn the reſemblance it bore to any of thoſe ſaid to be wrought by Jeſus or his Apoſtles. It is pity but he had ſhewn how this power of working miracles continued among the *French Prophets*, ſo called; and how remarkably they riſqued the truth of their revelations in the affair of *Emmes*, who was to riſe again from the dead, on ſuch a day foretold to their diſciples.

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being *ſeen by many*, p. 90. done before *many witneſſes*, p. 91. Theſe things compared with your introducing the particular fact of Chriſt's reſurrection, though you have introduced it from a book called *The Trial of the Witneſſes*, yet the uſe you have made of the fact and the evidences attending it, in compariſon, or rather in *contraſt*, will lead any careful reader to conclude, that *you have* not *taken a view of the ſubject conſidered ſimply in itſelf, without any view or regard to any particular revelation, or to any particular miracle, wrought, or ſuppoſed to be wrought, in favour of the divinity of any revelation*; unleſs great part of this XIIIth Section has nothing to do with your *Diſcourſe on Miracles*.

I NOW proceed to animadvert upon ſome parts of your argument.

SECT. I.

Upon the definition given of a miracle, and miracle-worker.

THERE are ſome things under the head of miracles, and under that of revelation, which I apprehend are no way clear or concluſive.

I OWN with you, *that a miracle expreſſes a ſenſible effect which is above the natural ability, or inherent power of man to cauſe or produce*, p. 2. But *that no miracle can be an evidence of the* DIVINITY *of a man's meſſage, except the power exerciſed in working the miracle be revealed to, and foretold by that man, that ſuch an effect will take place*; for otherwiſe, *it would not appear that the miracle was related to one man, or to his meſſage, more than to another*; and conſequently, *not to any man*; and therefore, *it could not be an evidence in the preſent caſe*, p. 4. this I deny. For a miracle may be appropriated to one man, in diſtinction from *any* and *every* other perſon, though he ſhould not foretel that ſuch an effect would take place: for *inſtance*, ſhould there be ſuch an immedi-

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ate and evident connection between the viſible action of a perſon, and a miraculous effect, as that of *Moſes*'s ſtriking a rock, and upon his doing ſo, the waters guſhing out; men would eaſily appropriate the miracle to *Moſes*, and not to any other man. *Or* was there ſo evident a connection between a man's ſpeaking a word, and the miraculous effect, ſuch as JESUS ſaying to the ſtormy winds and raging waves, BE STILL; and a calm inſtantly ſucceeds! any perſon preſent would readily apply the miracle to Jeſus, though he had not foretold the miraculous effect.—*Nay*, to put the matter yet farther, Mr. *Chubb's* definition is ſo far from being juſt concerning the *criterion* of a miracle-worker, that there is no neceſſity that the miracle-worker ſhould ſo much as either ſpeak or act, in order to determine the miraculous effect appropriate to him; for *inſtance*, ſhould *Jeſus* be ſurrounded with a crowd of people, and a *diſeaſed* woman ſhould privately touch his garment, under a ſtrong perſuaſion of his divine miſſion and power, and ſhould upon that touch *inſtantly* find herſelf in full ſtrength and vigor of body; would there in this caſe be any difficulty in aſcribing the miraculous power of healing to Jeſus.

THUS it is proved that Mr. *Chubb*'s account of the neceſſary *criterion* of a miracle-worker, *viz. that of foretelling the miraculous effect*, is not neceſſary to diſtinguiſh him.

NOR can I by any means allow Mr. *Chubb*'s farther account of this *ſort* of evidence; for he ſays, in that ſame place, *as miracles are here conſidered as* EVIDENCES *of the* DIVINITY *of a revelation; and as divine revelations are delivered to the world by the mouth, or pen of ſome man; ſo no miracle can be an evidence of the divinity of a man's meſſage, except the power exerciſed in working the miracle*, be ſubject to the man's will, as to the exerciſe of it; *or, at leaſt, except it be revealed to, and foretold by that man, that ſuch an effect will take place*, &c.

If Mr. *Chubb* means by the *miraculous power* being ſubject to a man's will, as to the exerciſe of it, its being *ſo* ſubject to his will, that he can apply it or direct the application of it either to atteſt *truth* or *falſehood*, or to procure the *good* or *hurt* of the creatures around him, I then beg leave to differ from him; nor do I ſee how Mr. *Chubb*'s definition can upon his own ſcheme be ſupported. He owns *p.* 33. " that " there is a natural and eſſential difference in things, " and that one thing or action is really *better* or *pre-* " *ferable* to another in nature—that there is a rule " of action reſulting from that difference, which e- " very moral agent ought in reaſon to govern his " actions by; and that God as the Governour of " the intelligent and moral world makes the reaſon " of things the rule and meaſure of his actions, in " *all* his dealings with his creatures, and this renders " him abſolutely and perfectly *wiſe* and *good*:"— now ſhould we ſuppoſe that the power exerciſed in working miracles was *ſo* ſubject to a man's will, as that he could direct the application of it to a *falſe* as well as to a *true* doctrine, to an *evil* as well as to a *good* purpoſe; ſuch a power of working miracles could not, in the nature of the thing, evidence the *divinity* of a man's meſſage: becauſe we muſt ſuppoſe, that the Governor of the intelligent and moral world makes the reaſon of things the rule and meaſure of his actions, in *all* his dealings with his creatures, and that he is *abſolutely* and *perfectly* wiſe and good. So that the power of working miracles cannot be ſubject to a man's will ſo as to be directed in the exerciſe of it, either to atteſt falſehood, or promote evil: it cannot, if it remain an evidence of the *divinity* of a man's meſſage.

Perhaps Mr. *Chubb* might have made a much better definition of a miracle, had he attended to that ſame hiſtory with care, from which he has his account of the *Magicians rods*. The true *miracle-worker* there, he would find to be *initiated* in this very principle,

viz.

viz. that the *miraculous effect* had nothing at all to do with his natural capacities or his freedom of agency. I would refer him to *Exod.* iv. 1, 2, 3, 4. where he will find "that *Moſes* is commanded to caſt down "his rod, God cauſeth it to become a ſerpent. *Mo-* "*ſes* was ſo ſurprized that he fled from the face of "it: a plain proof that his *free-agency* had nothing "to do in it. *Nay*, ſo far was he from exerting a "miraculous power *ad libitum*, that he exerted no "miraculous power at all, except Mr. *Chubb* will ſay "that it is a miracle for a man to caſt a rod or a "ſtick out of his hand."—*Beſides*,

AN effect wrought, that is *above* the *natural a-bility* and *inherent power* of man, don't ſeem to be reducible to that *kind* or *degree* of power and capacity which is requiſite to his *moral agency*; for-aſmuch, as it is above the *natural ability* and *inherent power* of man. This carries the idea of miraculous power beyond the man's graſp; and determines it to be a *foreign* influence or force. The *inherent power* being too impotent and ſcanty to wield and govern the miraculous power, will determine the man who is ſaid to work the miracle, to have neither *freedom* of agency or of volition in the miraculous operation *itſelf*.

AND yet, was it requiſite, in order to a man's being ſaid to *work a miracle*, that it may be made known to him that ſuch a quantity of extraordinary power ſhall be exerted; which *knowledge*, is to be ſignified by him, in *foretelling* that ſuch an effect will take place?—

SUPPOSING this, ſhould ſuch a Man declare that the *quantity of power* was his *own*, and that it was abſolutely under his direction, it would be no more a proof of his *meſſage* being divine, than any operation within the compaſs of his natural abilities and inherent powers would be. The extraordinary effect produced, if in atteſtation of a *divine doctrine*, or of a *revelation from God*, muſt have the proper marks

of

of its being a divine power: or it will have nothing in it, that is ſuitable to the nature of ſuch evidence. Thus we find the *Hiſtorian* recording the divine commiſſion given to *Moſes*; and in that, informing him, that the *reaſon* or *end* of the miracles that ſhould be performed, was, *that the Egyptians might know that* JEHOVAH, *or the King of Iſrael was God.* And the Egyptians ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, *when I ſtretch forth my hand upon Egypt.* Indeed this revelation to *Moſes* would not have ſtood for any thing if there had been no *ſigns* appointed to be uſed by him, which might direct the Egyptians to conſider the miracles wrought, as ſtanding related to him, and performed in confirmation of his meſſage being from God. He is therefore directed to ſay *to* AARON, *take thy rod and caſt it before* PHARAOH, *and it ſhall become a ſerpent.*

HE is ever to enforce his meſſage, as a *divine* meſſage—*and thou ſhalt ſay unto him*, i. e. to *Pharaoh*, the LORD GOD *of the Hebrews hath ſent me unto thee.* And in ſupport of this, the idolatrous people were to have miracles wrought, which ſhould demonſtrate the *finger of God*, or the power to be from *God.* So evident, we are told it was, that the *magicians* themſelves acknowledged it.—Nor could *Pharaoh* and his *Servants* be under any temptation to think that theſe miraculous effects were produced, at the abſolute pleaſure of *Moſes*, or of any being below God. To convince them that they were the operations of *Jehovah*, Moſes is commanded to ſtretch forth his hands towards heaven, and accordingly, *ſtretches forth his hands toward heaven*; directly and openly addreſſing the fountain of all power.

C SECT.

SECT II.

Farther thoughts upon the extent of humane ability: or upon the criterion of a Miracle-worker.

IT is of little avail that we are ſo ſollicitous about how far the natural abilities of man extends, which is the ſubject of Mr. *Chubb's* IId Section; for, he ſays, that this ſeems to be a difficulty too great for humane underſtanding to ſurmount, *p.* 11.

AND he tells us that ſhould a man *riſe up and move through the air, to the height, and with the ſwiftneſs of an eagle; or if he ſhould command a mountain to remove out of its place, and to ſtand in the mids of the ſea, and it ſhould be removed accordingly, this would be* juſt ground *of* preſuming *that thoſe effects exceeded the bounds of humane power; becauſe as this is* greatly *ſuperior to any power which has yet appeared to be in man, ſo from hence ariſes a* high *degree of probability, that it is* above *the natural ability of mankind; and there is* no *probability but only a* bare *poſſibility, if that, of the contrary*, p. 12.

THIS *extraordinary conceſſion* deſerves ſome notice. It ſeems that for a man to move through the air to the *height* and *ſwiftneſs* of an eagle; or to remove a *mountain*, and place it in the midſt of the ſea, at a word of command, is a *juſt ground* for *preſuming* that thoſe effects exceeded humane power!— If theſe be properly a *juſt ground* of *preſuming*, I wonder what would be requiſite to carry it to *demonſtration*! It is true, Mr. *Chubb* afterward ſays, that an *high degree of probability*, ariſes from this *juſt ground* for *preſuming*; nay, allows, there is *no* probability, but only a bare poſſibility, if that, of its not exceeding the bounds of humane power. But ſurely, unleſs Mr *Chubb* has formed the moſt romantic ideas of the extent of man's natural ability, he

he muſt conclude ſuch effects of power, CERTAIN proof of its exceeding the limits of humane power. I am perſuaded that ſhould any man tell Mr. *Chubb* that it came within the verge of his *natural ability* and *inherent power* to remove a *mole hill* or a *turf* from one field to another, only by virtue of ſpeaking a word, or commanding it to remove; he would look upon ſuch a man with contempt; and condemn him as a *fool* or a *madman*. Nor do I know of any man of common ſenſe, but what would treat the pretenſion with *ridicule*. To determine this, *viz.* whether the *natural ability* or *capacity* of man can extend to the removing of a mountain and placing it in the midſt of the ſea, is not a difficulty *too great* for humane underſtanding to ſurmount; foraſmuch, as it would be a *moſt certain* proof of a *ſort* of power not inherent in humane nature.

THERE are *criteria* enough of effects wrought, being *above* the compaſs of humane power: ſuch as turning a *dry ſtick*, or a *dead* (or rather an *inanimate*) *rod* into a living creature, in the form and figure of a ſerpent; as was the caſe with *Moſes* and *Aaron*: and the raiſing a man from the dead: curing the diſeaſed, the lame, the dumb, the deaf, and the blind, with a word ſpeaking——which have been done; nor is there any thing appears to the contrary by this whole *Diſcourſe on Miracles*, drawn up with all the care and art of which this *Gentleman* was maſter.

IT may indeed be objected, that, for any thing which appears to the contrary, *wicked* men may have been employed, as well as *good* men in working miracles, as atteſtations of the divinity of a miſſion or doctrine.

IT does not ſeem to me a clear point from revelation that any wicked man, ever did work a miracle during his prevailing regard to vice. Men might be miracle-workers whilſt they retain a moral temper and conduct, and afterwards turn

wicked: but ſo pure and holy was the ſource or origin of miraculous power, that men by becoming immoral, *did quench the ſpirit*. So that integrity and honeſty of mind ſeem all along through the *New Teſtament* Hiſtory requiſite both to the miracle-worker, and to the perſons relieved by ſuch extraordinary exertion of power. From hence it appears very improbable, that any *real miracle* ſhould ever have been wrought, to *delude* and *injure*.

But ſuppoſing they have been wrought by wicked men, it does not, *abſtractedly* conſidered, appear inconſiſtent with the nature of a real miracle: the *effect* produced being well adapted to the *end* it was deſigned to anſwer. *As for inſtance*, ſuppoſing [as Mr. *Chubb* once ſuppoſed; by St. *James*'s account] that *Elias* was a *paſſionate*, *angry* man; or let us ſuppoſe him to have been a *wicked* man, it would not have proved that the miracle wrought by him, was not well adapted to decide the controverſy between him [conſidered as comiſſioned by *Jehovah*, the God of Iſrael] and the prieſts of *Baal*. And it was not only well adapted to prevent the people's *halting between two opinions*, ſo oppoſite, but we find they were actually convinced by it. *Beſides*, the meſſage a man delivers, as from God, and atteſts by a miracle, is not the leſs a *truth*, for, or on account of the man's being a wicked man: inaſmuch, as Mr. *Chubb* will own, *that a vicious inviſible Being may act contrary to his general character*; and *do good in ſome inſtances*; and *that this is manifeſtly the caſe among men*; p. 53.

If the perſon who *wrought miracles* had taught this, *viz.* that he wrought thoſe miracles in teſtimony of his own *divine original*, or that he in a moſt *ſingular* manner came from God, or was approved and owned of God; even *ſo* approved and owned of him, that he claimed the relation of a *Son* to him, and called God his *Father*; then it would be every way requiſite that his *whole moral character* ſhould perfectly

perfectly agree with the known perfections of God: for, if in any branch of moral truth or virtue he appeared *defective*, no expreſſion of power would ſufficiently prove his *extraordinary* miſſion and claim.

In all other caſes, the working of miracles, or the being able to ſignify that ſuch and ſuch extraordinary effects ſhould be produced, does not ſtand ſtrictly connected with the indefectible *moral* character of the perſon, who is thus recommending a doctrine, as divine. It will therefore be no matter of wonder ſhould we find in *hiſtory*, the moſt excellent men [at the ſame time they were commiſſioned to work miracles] declaring a *poſſibility* of their being *rejected* of God; of their *finally failing* of the approbation of the Great Judge; and diſcern them placing the *qualifications* for happineſs, not in a miraculous faith, that could *remove mountains*, or, in the moſt *extenſive knowledge* of the ſecrets of nature, but in *moral temper* and *conduct*.

Had any, who have wrought *real* miracles, ever pretended this to be a part of their *virtue*, or what entered into their moral character, there would have been room to have doubted of the *divinity* of their pretenſions! but when this was ſo far from being the caſe, that none ever pretended to be the real *efficient*, or to work *in his own name*, but always to derive the power from the Being to whom he was appealing, and from whom he received his *credentials*; no deception, of any kind, could attend ſuch miracles: foraſmuch, as both the miracle itſelf, and the truth atteſted by it, muſt be worthy of God, or could have *no* claim to divinity.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of the capacity of inviſible agents to work miracles; in which is ſhewn, that a real miracle cannot be wrought in atteſtation of falſehood.

GREAT pains has been taken by Mr. *Chubb* to ſhew *how many difficulties* attend our judging of miracles, as, in truth, atteſting a divine revelation. For, *as to the* degree *and* kind *of power created beings are capable of exerciſing, we are in the dark, and muſt leave this point under the ſame* uncertainty *that we find it. For as* inviſible *agents are beings which we are perfect* ſtrangers *to, ſo the* kinds *or* degrees *of power which may ariſe from their natural conſtitutions, are what we have* no *poſſible way to diſcover:—and that it is equally as* eaſy *for God to communicate* one *kind or degree of power as* another, *at leaſt, for any thing we* know *or can* ſhew *to the contrary*, p. 14.

THERE can be no more than *mere* ſuppoſition in this, ſince, in Mr. *Chubb*'s IIId Section he aſſerts, *that to know whether there are any other inviſible agents but God, which can, or at leaſt, which do, act upon this globe, is a taſk exceeding difficult—that there is no argument to be drawn from the revelation in the preſent argument—that it remains an undetermined point, neither the affirmative nor the negative ſide to be taken*—But notwithſtanding all this, moſt part of what follows in his *Diſcourſe on Miracles* has to do with the operation of inviſible agents, conſidered as good or bad!—It would take up too much room to mention *one half* of ſuch reaſoning: and inaſmuch, as the *moſt perplexing* articles of the whole ſcheme, ſeem to be built on the *hypotheſis* of inviſible agents being able to *impoſe* upon man, and *delude* him: I ſhould imagine, that whoever attends to Section III. muſt ſee that Mr. *Chubb*'s *hypotheſis* has not the leaſt foundation: foraſmuch as he excludes all argument drawn from

from revelation, and declares the operation of inviſible agents upon this globe, to remain with him an *undetermined point, neither the affirmative nor the negative ſide to be taken.*

WHY ſhould Mr. *Chubb* entertain the world with *chimeras* and *whims*, ſuch as, upon his own confeſſion, are ſo; things about which he has no *Ideas*; and not only ſo, but make theſe *fictions* to enter gravely into the argument, and to ſtand, as difficulties that will embarraſs and leſſen the degree of *probability*, in the evidence of real miracles?—Let any careful reader, but attend to the repeated declarations Mr. *Chubb* has made of our *ignorance about angels*, of whom he ſays, *p.* 47. *we know nothing about them*—let him but ſtrip off all the harangue, and then, if he can, make any thing of what remains of this *hypotheſis*:—*eſpecially*, when he adds to this, a farther declaration of Mr. *Chubb*'s, *viz.* that we are not only in the dark, as to the operation of other inviſible agents, acting upon this our globe, BUT IT IS A QUESTION WHETHER GOD HIMSELF DOES INTERPOSE, *ſince prevalency of power cannot be a proof of its being divine*, p. 15.

If this be the true ſtate of the caſe, all the queſtions put, I ſhould think very trifling; for example, ſuch as the following, *viz. Whether God will ſuffer inviſible agents to exert their power for the deluſion of his creatures? All inviſible agents being at liberty to exert their power in ſerving what purpoſes they pleaſe.*—Upon the ſuppoſition that there are ſuch inviſible agents, this will appear very improbable that they ſhould at all interpoſe, it being a queſtion *whether God himſelf does interpoſe*; unleſs their concern and influences may be ſuppoſed to be more extenſive than God's.—But upon the ſuppoſition that neither God nor any other inviſible agent does interpoſe, *as we are entirely in the dark about both*; then the queſtion here put, *is quite needleſs.*—And upon this needleſs, uſeleſs,

uſeleſs, aerial foundation, the greateſt part of Mr. *Chubb*'s *hypotheſis* ſtands.

IT ſeems to be a general miſtake, in this *Writer*, that a *real interpoſal*, ſuch as ſhould ariſe to the true nature of a miracle, muſt expreſs *nothing but power*. This ſeems to be the ſentiment here, it being the reaſon aſſigned, why it is not likely God ſhould himſelf EVER interpoſe, *ſince prevalency of power cannot be a proof of its being divine*.

BUT, give me leave to aſk, whether a *divine interpoſal* may not expreſs ſomething elſe beſides power? may it not diſcover *wiſdom* alſo? nay, *compaſſion*, and *fatherly goodneſs?*—Mr. *Chubb* will own, *that God is the common parent of his creatures, and the natural guardian of their happineſs*, p. 38. and may not an *extraordinary exertion* of his power, bear the complexion of a tender parent? and being in atteſtation of ſome *ſcheme of favour* to men, may it not alſo, have the marks of *truth* and *veracity* in it; detecting falſehood, diſcovering deception, and reſtoring to juſt Sentiments and Ideas of his once *diſputed* Sovereignty and Dominion? If ſo, then we have no need to reſt *only* upon prevalency of power for the proof of any miracle's being from God; but ſuch other features may be ſtamped upon the miracle, as ſhew it to be genuinely divine.

BESIDES, as God *is the common parent of his creatures, and the natural guardian of their happineſs*, it is no way improbable but that he may have ſhewn himſelf to be ſo by *extraordinary interpoſals*, at ſuch times, and in ſuch circumſtances, which would render ſuch extraordinary interpoſals capable of giving the moſt conſpicuous diſplay of his adorable character; and recommend his name to the *reverence*, *fear*, and *truſt* of his creatures.—

THERE is a mighty fine diſtinction made about *Truth*, as oppoſed to error, and to falſehood; *which Truth oppoſed to falſehood, only becomes good or evil by the purpoſes it is made to ſerve*, p. 58.

AND

AND this is in order to ſhew, *that there may be ſome extraordinary caſes in which it may be fit for virtuous inviſible agents, not to have a ſtrict regard to truth*, p. 54.

BUT ſhould any virtuous man pretend to an expreſs commiſſion from God, or to an immediate revelation, who at the ſame time knew he had no ſuch thing, and Mr. *Chubb* was capable of diſcovering the fallacy of this pretenſion or claim, I am of opinion, that whatever *end* the man might have in view, Mr. *Chubb* would ſcarce know how to form any conſiſtent notion of the *virtue* of this *impoſtor*, or imagine him acceptable either to *God*, or even to thoſe *men* who knew of the deception; the *end* would be hard put to it, to ſanctify the *means*; or the man be able to convince a reaſonable Being, that he was a *worthy* meſſenger of the God of Truth.

AND if we ſuppoſe a *ſuperior* Being, to have a proportionally ſuperior knowledge of the *nature* and *dignity* of the divine rule and government, we ſhall be tempted to think, he muſt much more abhor ſo *daring* an attempt, as to *forge*, as it were, the BROAD SEAL of heaven, in order to promote the acknowledged ſovereignty of it. Would not this look like *defect* and *weakneſs* in the divine rule? That the kingdom of Truth, would need the ſupports of falſehood and impoſture.

MR. *Chubb* has expreſsly denied that we know any thing about the power of inviſible agents, and yet he begins the *wild chaſe* with introducing *the raiſing of a dead perſon to life*, as a work *not above* the natural ability or inherent power of a created Being, *p.* 15, 16.

HIS argument is this, *the* animal *life* (as appears to us) *has a connection with, and dependence upon a* body *fitly organized*, and *ſtored with juices*, and *thoſe juices in a* proper *motion*, &c. *So that if ſome of the* principal *parts of the machine are thrown into any* great *diſorder, or if the* juices *are let out, or ſtag-*

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nate, or the like, then a ceſſation *of life will enſue, except ſome* ſpeedy *remedy be applied*—p. 15.

I CONFESS I do not like the *et cætera*, placed at the end of thoſe *few* things on which the animal life depends. I wiſh he had mentioned *all* thoſe things which it appears to him to depend upon. He obliges me to add,—It moſt evidently depends upon the *animating ſpirit* or *providence of God.*—The humane Family have generally acknowledged this, even ſuch as have had no expreſs revelation, have thought themſelves, TO BE THE OFFSPRING OF GOD—which contains in its idea, that in him we *live*, and *move*, and *are*. So that the fit organization of the body, and its being duly ſtored with juices, and thoſe juices continuing in proper motion, depend on the inviſible hand of the Almighty Former: And who is it that ſhould have a *right* of continuing or diſcontinuing life, but the Author of it? He, who gives the firſt moment to the blood and fluids, and has ſo wonderfully contrived the almoſt infinitely complex machine.

THE power either of *continuing* or *reſtoring* animal life, cannot then be within the compaſs of the *natural ability* or *inherent power* of any created Being: unleſs, the obligations of dependence for *life* and *being* can belong to any other but God. More eſpecially, muſt this be denied, ſince ſuch capacity is ſuppoſed to be under the direction of a creature, as a *free agent!* [i. e. in the ſcheme of Mr. *Chubb*] a *prerogative* manifeſtly too high for the creature.—

HOWEVER, this *Gentleman* produces ſome inſtances, in ſupport of his argument. He ſays, *death has been prevented by a ſkilful ſurgeon or phyſician interpoſing, when death otherwiſe would ſpeedily have enſued—and in ſome inſtances, life has* ſeemed, *at leaſt, to have been reſtored*, p. 16.

BUT what does this prove? only in the former caſe, that God does not extraordinarily interpoſe to preſerve lives, where the means of ſuch preſervation may

may be had—and that in the latter caſe, there may have been a *diſappearance* of all the ſymptoms of life, for a ſhort ſeaſon, and after that, a revival. Had Mr. *Chubb* ſaid that life had *actually* been taken away, and the perſon *really* dead, and after this, *reſtored* to life by the *phyſicians* or *ſurgeons*, it had been more to the purpoſe. But for my part I never heard of a *phyſician* or *ſurgeon* who when fully perſuaded that a perſon was really dead, [if his character was that of a rational, judicious man] would pretend by his *art* to recover life. Nor did any ever pretend to underſtand the *firſt principles* of it; much leſs, how to *reinſtate* them.—

HAD this ever been the caſe, ſome good-natured phyſician or other, would certainly have given a ſpecimen of his ſkill, by preſerving his own life in order to have preſerved the life of his friends, or have taught mankind how to have baniſhed *mortality* out of the humane family.—

THE inſtance of the *magicians* by their *enchantments* turning dead rods into ſerpents, *p.* 17. will not in the leaſt perplex the doctrine of miracles. Suppoſing it was *commonly underſtood*, that they derived this power from evil ſpirits; this does not ariſe to any degree of evidence that they did ſo. The hiſtorian ſays no ſuch thing: and if he had, that would have proved nothing againſt the doctrine of miracles, foraſmuch as he reports them, not as *real* miracles, but as *deceptions*. The *Egyptian wiſe men* and the *ſorcerers* which *Pharaoh* called, *Ainſworth* obſerves, to have been ſuch, *as by changing the form of things into another hue, bewitch the ſenſes and minds of men*; * the Hebrew word *caſhaph* ſignifying, *men artful in deception*.—Theſe *wiſe men* and *ſorcerers* did ſo with their *enchantments*; i. e. with their *ſecret ſleights* and *jugglings*, by *ſecret* and *cloſe conveyance*—altering the *medium* of viſion; diſturbing the air, gliſtering like a flame of fire, or a ſword, wherewith

* On Exod. vii. 11.

men's eyes are dazzled.—So the Greek word βασκαινω, rendered *bewitched*,* ſignifies light falling with *too great* a glare on the eyes; which ſhew the eyes to be *injured* and not *helped* by the light.—And ſo the word *ſorcery*, has in the Greek, φαρμακια,† which ſignifies the *art of poiſoning by deception.*

BESIDES, the ſtory of the Egyptian *magicians* exactly tallies with their names and character. For whether they did thoſe wonderful *feats* from the progreſs they had made in the art of deceiving the eye, by *juggle* or *legerdemain*; or whether ſome inviſible evil beings did aſſiſt them, it is apparent they performed *no* real miracle. Their being ſaid *to do in like manner* with their enchantments, is only expreſſive of their deceiving the eyes of *Pharaoh*, and of his ſervants. Nor could they carry the mimickery in one ſingle article throughout. Inſtead of this, the *hiſtorian* informs us, that AARON's rod, *ſwallowed up their rods.*

AND when they had pretended to turn the water into blood—and likewiſe brought frogs; ſo conſcious were they of their mimickery being *all deception*, that they could not engage to remove theſe plagues, which they knew were *in reality* brought by *Moſes* and *Aaron*. But *Pharaoh* ſupplicates the real *miracle-workers*, to beſeech the LORD, in whoſe name, and by whoſe power, theſe *effects* were produced, to remove them; which he would not have done, had it been in the power of his *magicans.*

THE removal of them, by *Moſes* and *Aaron*, after theſe *jugglers* had been unable to do any thing towards it, *ſeems* to have put them ſo much out of countenance, that upon their attempting to uſe their *enchantments*, in bringing lice; they *blundered* in their attempt, were *confounded*, and conſtrained to own, that the miracles wrought by *Moſes* and *Aaron* were real miracles. And leſt *Pharaoh* ſhould have any the leaſt room to imagine his *magicians* were capable of

* Gal. iii. 1. † Rev. xviii. 23.

doing

doing any true miracle, they are ſmitten with the *boyl*, ſo that they could not ſtand before *Pharaoh*.

UPON the whole, *if theſe* MAGICIANS *did ſo* CHANGE *and* DISPOSE *the particles of matter which conſtituted a dead rod, as that they became an organized body, ſtored with juices, in a proper motion, and could do whatever was farther neceſſary to render that dead rod, a* LIVING, ACTIVE BEING, *p.* 17. then I infer, that there is a ſtrong probability, that it was within their inherent power, to *rectify* the diſorders occaſioned by the *boyl*, and not to have lain *any time* under that calamity. Eſpecially, *as it is moſt evident*, p. 24. *that deluſion does take place, ſo it is alike evident that God* muſt *permit and ſuffer it, whilſt there are ſuch things as free creatures in being.* But to proceed,

THE *raiſing of a dead perſon to life*, is an effect plainly *above* the natural ability or inherent power of any creature whatſoever: and muſt be ſo, if there be ONE *firſt cauſe*, the fountain of *life* and *being*; the ſovereign arbiter and diſpoſer of it.

IT is no manner of objection to this, that men have been empowered to raiſe the dead: foraſmuch, as all who have done ſo, have ever applied to the origin of power either *immediately* or *mediately*; and have ever confeſſed the effect to be the produce of almighty power. Nor is it poſſible, in the nature of the thing, that this power by which the dead are raiſed, can be *ſo* under the direction of a man's will, as to the exerciſe of it; *nay*, or be *ſo* in ſubjection to the will of any being whatſoever, as to be applied in atteſtation either of *truth* or *falſehood*, or for the production of *good* or *evil*. To ſuppoſe this, would be to ſubject the Deity itſelf to the *caprice* and *humour* of the creature; and render the unchangeably *wiſe* and *good* being, mutable and inconſiſtent in his operations: A concluſion, which can by no means be allowed by Mr. *Chubb*, who declares, *that God, as Governor of the intelligent and moral world, makes the*

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reaſon of things, the rule and meaſure of his actions, in all his dealings with his creatures, and this renders him abſolutely and perfectly wiſe and good.—It will therefore follow, that though inviſible agents, are beings which we are perfect ſtrangers to, and to the *kinds* and *degrees* of power, which may ariſe from their natural conſtitutions: yet, foraſmuch *as God, the Governor of the world of moral, intelligent beings, makes the reaſon of things, the rule and meaſure of his actions in his dealings with his creatures*, we may hence be aſſured, that he neither has, nor can communcicate any ſuch *kind* or *degree* of power, as ſhall confound and deſtroy the higheſt evidences of his own ſupremacy and dominion; and plainly contradict *the reaſon of things*, in his dealings with his creatures. But, this would manifeſtly be the caſe, if either men or inviſible agents had ſuch a *kind* or *degree* of power ſubject to their will, or which might be exerted either in teſtimony of truth or falſehood. And the inſtances of *raiſing the dead*, or of ſo *changing* or *diſpoſing* the particles of matter, which conſtitute a *dead rod*, as to become an organized body, ſtored with juices, in proper motion, and actually transformed into a living being; are evident expreſſions of power that will not eaſily be diſtinguiſhed either in their *kind* or *degree* from creative power. And if ſo, then I may not owe my *being* or *life* to an univerſal Parent, an increated Being; but to a creaturely, limited Father, whoſe power of forming me was abſolutely under the direction of his own will! and whether a virtuous or a vicious being, I know not. So that on the *hypotheſis* of any creature's being able to raiſe the dead, *&c.* by a power ſubject to his own will, we ſhall be confounded in all our ideas of obligation and dependence; and may, as probably, oppoſe the will of our Former by *purſuing truth*, as by *not purſuing* it. I conclude therefore from the known character of the Supreme Being, that he has imparted no ſuch *kind* or *degree* of power, as that exerted in raiſing the dead,

which

which can be ſo under ſubjection to the will of the creature, as to be applied either in ſupport of *truth*, or of *falſehood*: for then, he would not have made, *the reaſon of things*, the rule and meaſure of his actions, in *all* his dealings with his creatures.

NOTWITHSTANDING this, I would obſerve, that men muſt have been commiſſioned to work miracles, even that *of raiſing the dead*, or elſe one third part of Mr. *Chubb*'s *True Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, will be in great danger of being loſt, *viz.* that of Chriſt's aſſuring men that God has appointed a day in which he will moſt *certainly judge the world, by him:** by him who came to *ſave men's ſouls:*† by him who is conſtituted to be, not only the *ſole law-giver*, but alſo the *ſole judge* of the behaviour of his people.‖ This branch of Mr. *Chubb*'s *True Goſpel* will ſtand upon a very precarious foundation, if men have *not* been able to raiſe the dead: foraſmuch as the *genuine* Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt aſſures us, that this Jeſus Chriſt commiſſioned his diſciples to *raiſe the dead*:§ and his Apoſtles are empowered after his reſurrection, to do many miracles, and even to raiſe the dead *in his name*, hereby atteſting the truth of his reſurrection, and divine miſſion.** And this in conſequence of all *power* being given him by the Father.††—But if his Apoſtles did not work miracles, and raiſe the dead, in virtue of the commiſſion received from him during his publick miniſtry: if they did not work *real* miracles, and actually raiſe to life the *really* dead, in confirmation of the doctrine of his own reſurrection from the dead: then, his aſſuring men that God will *certainly* judge the world by him, has no good foundation of credit. But if we admit him to be conſtituted, not only the *ſole law-giver*, but alſo the *ſole judge* of

* True Goſpel, *p.* 40. † *p.* 1. ‖ *p.* 7.
§ Matt. x. 8. ** Act. iii. 15, 16. comp. Mar. xvi. 17.
†† Matt. xxviii. 18.

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the behaviour of men; then we muſt allow he was actually *declared* or *determined* to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead.

SECT. IV.

God farther vindicated from ſuffering ſuch deluſion. —An attempt to ſtate witchcraft, magic and ſorcery *in their true light, and to ſhew what is to be underſtood by them.*

MR. *Chubb* has another enquiry, and that is, *whether God will* ſuffer *inviſible agents to exert ſuch power as they have, when it is to be exerciſed for the* deluſion *of his creatures? And here, if we argue by* analogy, *that is, if we* infer *from his conduct in* one *caſe, how he will act in* another, *then it is plain, that God* will *ſuffer inviſible agents to exert their power in ſerving what purpoſes they* pleaſe. *Men, we ſee, are at* liberty, *and do* actually *delude one another, in* every *kind of deluſion, though it be in points of the* utmoſt *importance, and for each other's* hurt, *and ſometimes, when they have no other advantage from it, but the* bare *pleaſure of deluding; and thus they deal with the* creatures *below them; and thus, in like manner,* thoſe creatures *deal with one another. From whence ariſes a* ſtrong *probability that all inviſible agents (if there are any ſuch) are at* liberty *to exert their power in ſerving* what *purpoſes they pleaſe*, p. 18, 19.

IT might perhaps be ſufficient to remark, that we have no authentick account of any *real miracle* having ever been wrought to atteſt a falſehood. Thoſe writings which ſeem to claim a divine authority, mention no ſuch deluſion having ever took place. When the *Egyptian conjurers* would have aped the real miracles of *Moſes* and *Aaron*, they diſcovered what they did to be only a *deceptio viſus:* and were ſoon convicted of their wickedneſs.—Nor could any of the

the *exorciſts* among the Jews perform any real miracle, though they took upon them to call over them which had evil ſpirits (or great maladies) the *name of the Lord Jeſus.* And though *ſeven* ſons of *Sceva*, a Jew, chief of the prieſts *did ſo*, yet they felt the force of their own deception to their greateſt danger and coſt.* So that if we attend to theſe accounts, and compare them with the reaſon and nature of things, we ſhall be led to conclude, that it is no way conſiſtent with the moral character of God as a wiſe and good governor, that he ſhould ever ſuffer *ſuch deception.* I ſhall advert to ſome farther inſtances.

THE *vagabond* Jews exorciſts, mentioned, *v.* 13. to have took upon them to call over them which had evil ſpirits the name of Jeſus, the phraſe, *took upon them*, has a word to anſwer it, (επιχειρησαν) which ſignifies to move the hand *artfully*, to perform ſurprizing things.—And the many ſaid to have uſed *curious arts*, *v.* 19. has a word which ſignifies *ſomething beſide the purpoſe*; *needleſs*, or *uſeleſs* things. (περιεργων) So *Scapula* has obſerved it to be uſed by *Ariſtotle* and *Plutarch.*

ALL pretenſions to work miracles at the time of our Saviour and his Apoſtles were *detected* and *expoſed.*

THE Jews did indeed charge our Lord with caſting out devils by *Beel-zebub* or *Baal-zebub*, the God of flies. But ſays *the wiſdom of God*, if I caſt out devils by that impotent Idol, *by whom do your Sons caſt them out?*—It was contrary to reaſon for any to think, *that Satan ſhould caſt out Satan*, or be divided againſt himſelf in order to ſupport his own Kingdom.—But it was evident from our Lord's anſwer, that their Sons had no power of doing any real miracle, which was diſcoverable in the *ſeven Sons* of *Sceva*, the Jew, above mentioned; and in the *many exorciſts* who brought their books to be burnt. And likewiſe in the caſe of *Simon* the ſorcerer, who

* Acts. xix. 13.

bewitched the people of *Samaria*,* giving out that he was ſome great one. To whom they all gave heed from the leaſt unto the greateſt, ſaying, this man is the *great power of God*. And to him, they had regard, becauſe of long time he had *bewitched* them with ſorceries: which ſame word, rendered *bewitched*,† is applied to *Simon* himſelf, who beholding the miracles and ſigns that were done (by the Apoſtles) was bewitched, *v.* 13. the very ſame word rendered *wondered*, which before in the ſame context is twice rendered *bewitched*. So that the word could not import any thing more than an aſtoniſhment; a being bewildered or carried beyond the proper uſe of the faculties, a conſternation!

And no wonder St. *Luke* uſes the ſame word to expreſs the *amazement* of Simon upon his view of real miracles, ſince we find his head run giddy with the glare of them, expecting to be empowered himſelf to work them. A plain and ſtrong intimation that his ſorceries were mere deceptions; and that the miracles, though real, had no better effect upon him, ſince he had the moſt ſordid and baſe views, as appears by his offering money as a purchaſe of the *ſacred impartment*.

Let us next turn to the *Old Teſtament*. And,

The account given of the woman who had a familiar Spirit, or the *witch of Endor*; will by no means prove or diſcover the capacity of any *inviſible agent*, to impoſe upon, and throw in any unavoidable deception. She is ſuppoſed, by ſome, to have had a commerce with inviſible, evil Spirits; and that by their inſtruction, ſhe could divine, or foretell future events. But the narrative will inform us, that it was no ſuch thing. Nor was ſhe able to bring up *Samuel* from the dead.

This will be a clear caſe, if the following things be attended to.

* Act. viii. 9, and onward. † Εξισατο

They

THEY who make the ſuppoſition that a woman could be *miſtreſs of an evil ſpirit*, and have it at her command, always allow, that a great degree of wickedneſs, muſt qualify for ſuch a familiarity. And if any ſuch qualification could be attained this way, *Saul* ſeems to have as large a claim to be *maſter of ſuch a ſpirit*, as this woman of Endor, to be a *miſtreſs of it*. He ſeemed fully diſpoſed for any meaſures that might have rendered him as good a *wizard*, as ſhe was a *witch*. But it was all deception; —indeed ſhe appears to have had an artful way of ſpeaking, as if the voice came out of the belly. Nor is this a thing impracticable; I, myſelf, have known a young fellow, who (pretending nothing more than to gain a penny by his art,) could ſo throw the ſound of his voice, that it ſhould to the niceſt ear, ſeem to riſe from the ground, to be rumbling under his hat, or to come from this or the other diſtant point; which *art* was probably underſtood by the *Pythoneſs*, and improved by various incantations in the dark cell made uſe of;— a moſt proper place to carry on the deluſion. The xixth *Iſaiah* 3. ſpeaking of them that have *familiar Spirits*; the *Septuagint* renders it, *thoſe ſpeaking*, (as it were) *out of the earth*;* which agrees with the metaphorical account of the wretched condition of Jeruſalem, ch. xxix. 4. *And thou ſhalt be brought down, and ſhalt ſpeak out of the ground, and thy ſpeech ſhall be low out of the duſt, and thy voice ſhall be as one that hath a familiar Spirit, out of the ground, and thy ſpeech ſhall whiſper, or peep, or chirp out of the duſt.* A *low* and *baſe* origin, that, of the familiar Spirit *out of the ground*—.

AGAIN, the ingenious author of a modern piece, called *the Life of David*, has, I think, ſufficiently cleared this *Pythoneſs* from having had any hand in raiſing *Samuel*; whoſe obſervations appear to be grounded on the *text*, which ſhews, the *terror* ſhe

* Καὶ τὰς ἐκ τῆς γῆς φθεγγομένας.

was in at ſeeing *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 12, 13. —Nor could it be from any art of *Saul*'s; for then, he had had no motive to have enquired after this *Pythoneſs*. Neither was was it the effect of any *juggle* or *trick*, no imaginary appearance occaſioned by the power of inviſible, evil Spirits; [they were incapable of raiſing *Samuel*] but it was the effect of *divine* power, for *v.* 14. the text ſays, and *Saul* perceived that it was *Samuel himſelf*; ſo it may and ſhould be rendered. Upon which he ſtooped with his face to the ground, and *bowed himſelf*; ſays this writer, *did obeyſance*. *

THE *denunciation* ſhews it could be no impoſtor who gave it. † See v. 16, 17, 18, 19.

SO *Manaſſeh* is charged with obſerving times, uſing enchantments, and witchcraft, and dealing with a familiar Spirit, and with wizards, 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 6. the Septuagint renders *witchcraft*, by a word which ſignifies *the art of poiſoning by deception*: and the *familiar Spirit*, by a word, which expreſſly ſignifies, *ſpeaking out of the belly*.

WHILST wickedly diſpoſed, he choſe to deal in all manner of deceptions; but when he conſidered and came to himſelf, he knew that *Jehovah* was God, *v.* 13.

SO, it does not appear that ſuch deluſions that are in our World do ever take place, but as the mind is *indiſpoſed* for Truth; and that the riſing degrees of vice, will of themſelves introduce the greateſt darkneſs. For, as the *imagination* is furniſhed with all its images, from falſe perceptions, it is no wonder that its *fictions* are admitted, as realities.

BUT it is ſaid, that the Jews had a law that denounced death upon witchraft, *Exod.* xxii. 18. *Deut.* xviii. 10. The learned *Ainſworth* obſerves upon this laſt place, " That theſe *ſorcerers* or *jugglers* the *He-* " *brews* ſeem to have diſtinguiſhed into two ſorts, " *viz.* ſome that did hurt, others that did hold the

* Hiſtory of the Life of David, *p.* 279. † *p.* 283.

" eyes,

" eyes, that is, by juggling and ſleights, beguiled " men's ſenſes."

THE *reaſon* of the law, I think, was very plain; for ſuch either deluded people ſo far, as to lead them into ſome *great immoralities*; or *at leaſt* pretended to wonderful power derived from *falſe Demons* or *Gods*, to the ſubverſion of the firſt ſtatute *law* of the Jewiſh Theocracy.—And wherever any make uſe of *artful deceptions* in order to ſeduce others from the paths of truth and virtue, ſuch are *ſorcerers* and *witches*, and are unworthy a better character. Or, if any pretend to derive extraordinary or divine powers which they exert in atteſtation of falſehood, ſuch may richly deſerve to go under this denomination; as they ſo openly inſult the ſtrong evidences, and manifeſt doctrine of *one* ſupreme, all-perfect Being.

THE above *Ainſworth* obſerves, that *Mecaſh-ſheph* (the witch) *is to be ſtoned to death, if he do the act of witchcraft: but he that holdeth the eyes, and ſeemeth to do what he doth not, is to be beaten.* This he cites from *Maimony's tract of Idol.* What there was in this *Rabbinical* diſtinction I pretend not to underſtand; but this I think may fairly be concluded from the whole, *viz.* that men were capable of diſtinguiſhing between *witchcraft*, or any act of *ſorcery*, and *real nature*, or *miracles*; otherwiſe, there would have been nothing to have grounded the law upon, that enacted the different puniſhments.

NOR would God have expreſsly puniſhed witchcraft with death, had not men been able to judge clearly about the nature of it. Poſſibly the art of witchcraft, puniſhable with death, was, *their alluring virgins to proſtitute their virtue, under pretence of doing honour to ſome idol.* For, wherever we read of men's having or attending to *wizards*, *witches*, &c. there is always mention made of great immoralities

ralities and idolatries. So that the reaſon of the law is evident.

NOR only ſo, but God is ſo far from being chargeable with permitting or ſuffering deluſions from inviſible agents; that he has expreſsly prohibited, and made the crime capital for any *viſible* ones to uſe arts in order to propagate *vice* and *idolatry:* and has given to all men a capacity, if they will uſe it, ſufficient to guard againſt deception: which Mr. *Chubb* owns, *p.* 23. but then he ſays, *the generality of men are ſo far from uſing, and following their underſtanding in* this *particular, that, on the contrary, they are* too apt *to follow every one, who takes upon him to* guide *them, and are* very eaſily *miſled and deluded; ſo that the* honeſt, plain, ſimple *part of mankind, are not an* equal *match for the more ſubtle and crafty. And it is in this view that man is to be conſidered.*

I OWN, that the *abuſe of the underſtanding* is a very common vice; but then I ſhould rather chuſe with the SPECTATOR* to attribute this, *to an affectation of wit and ſenſe, as preferable to honeſty and virtue;* than to an affectation of being *prieſt-ridden.* It is true however, that there are many men too ſubtle and crafty, for the honeſt, plain, and ſimple part of mankind. But then of what avail are thoſe deceptions? The honeſt, the plain, and the ſimple, remaining ſo, are *above a match* for the ſubtle and crafty. Nor is it in the power of the ſubtle and crafty, to rob men that are plain and ſimple, of their *honeſty.* For this would be to ſuppoſe the ſubtle and crafty had a capacity of deſtroying the *power of moral agency* or *freedom of volition* in men: which, I am of opinion, is not to be ſuppoſed.

BESIDES, in matters of moral good and evil, the rule of action muſt be diſcernible by every moral agent, or his accountableneſs cannot take place. So that to ſuppoſe the crafty and ſubtle can ſo eraſe the

* Vol. I. N°. 6.

firſt

firſt principles of moral good, out of the minds of men, who are honeſt, plain, and ſimple, without their being capable of preventing this eraſement; is to ſuppoſe, that the *honeſt, plain, and ſimple* part of mankind, may become *diſhoneſt*, and *deſigning*, without blame, and without becoming accountable.—But if the crafty and ſubtle after all their *cunning* and *deluſions* may be ſuppoſed, according to the letter of Mr. *Chubb*, to leave this part of mankind, *honeſt, plain*, and *ſimple*; I muſt ſtill ſay, as I ſaid before, they do not ſeem to be over-matched by the crafty and ſubtle. And then, though man be conſidered in this view, it will give us no diſagreeable Idea of God's Government, who does not interpoſe ſo as to hinder men from being crafty and ſubtle.

Mr. *Chubb* owns, *p.* 23. *that if men would rightly uſe and follow their underſtandings, they would be guarded and ſecured from every deluſion, though backed with the power of an inviſible agent*, &c.

Which fully vindicates the divine Governor in not interpoſing; all men having a ſufficient ſecurity againſt deluſion, and muſt of conſequence become *criminal* if they are impoſed upon. The revelation itſelf, where given, does not hinder men from *abuſing* and *neglecting* their underſtanding; ſo that it is no impeachment of his wiſdom and goodneſs that the revelation is not made univerſal, or that God does not interpoſe to hinder men from being *too apt* to follow every one who takes upon him to *guide* them, or that they are *very eaſily* miſled and deluded.

On the other hand, this ariſes from the freedom with which man is inveſted; and no meaſure of providence has been ever intended to offer violence to it.

Mr. *Chubb* may throw aſide his *analogy*; foraſmuch as he will be able to find *no* ground of analogy from the liberty men are at to *delude* one another. They have no impartments of ſuch extraordinary power, nor of any ſuch *marks* of truth attending their

their deluſions, as render them too ſpecious to be detected. No man is void of a capacity of diſtinguiſhing between truth or falſehood, ſo far as he is concerned under the character of a moral agent. *For man is a* free *being who has the direction of his own actions; and as he is endowed with a diſcerning and reaſoning faculty, which when carefully uſed and attended to would in the general rightly direct his underſtanding, his affections, and actions; (excepting in difficult and perplexed caſes, in which he would be liable to err, and conſequently to act wrong, and which wrong behaviour his kind Creator would not unreaſonably take advantage from) ſo this puts it in every man's* power *and leaves it in his* choice *to behave well, or ill; to render himſelf pleaſing or diſpleaſing to God; and conſequently, to be the proper object of divine favour, or reſentment.**

How will Mr. *Chubb* argue from *analogy*, that this being the ſtate of man, thoſe deluſions which obtain in the world, are a reaſon, why God ſhould ſuffer *inviſible agents* to exert their power, in ſerving what purpoſes they pleaſe?

"The *inſects* or *animals*, being many of them a "prey to one another, *p*. 20." I humbly preſume will not ſupport the analogy, unleſs the *fly* and the *ſpider* muſt be ſuppoſed in theſe regards to be moral agents; and that the ſuperior ſkill of the *ſpider* to the *fly*, diſcovered a want of goodneſs in the all-wiſe Creator.—The caſe of a *tyrannical Governor* is not a proper inſtance of God's permitting *deluſion* to obtain among men, nor will it ſo much as deſtroy the *liberty* of the ſlave, conſidered as a moral agent. He can yet *approve* and *condemn* in his own mind what is right and fit, and what is not ſo. And even the ſuperior *craft* of one man to another, does not ſeem to oblige God to interpoſe in the manner here contended for. What if MAHOMET had *power* and *craft* to ſpread a deception in the world? inaſmuch as here was no *ſupernatural power* or *illumination* imparted to

* See Mr. *Chubb*'s True Goſpel, *p*. 114.

carry

carry on the deception, and men had been forewarned, every where, by the Chriſtian doctrine to beware of all IMPOSTURES; and to *examine* and *try* the ſpirits, whether they are of God. † Since this was the caſe, and men lay under no diſadvantages ſuperior to the *quantum* of light and power they were poſſeſſed of, how does this ſupport the argument from analogy?—Had God interpoſed by marks of *extraordinary* power, in order to prevent the ſpread of the deception, this could not have aſcertained the end; foraſmuch, *as men would yet be at liberty, whilſt they are* agents *to exerciſe their natural ability, in ſerving what purpoſes they pleaſe; for take away that liberty, and their agency* ceaſes, *or is* deſtroyed, *p.* 29. And this we are told was a truth at the *firſt propagation* of Chriſtianity. Men attended or not to the miraculous interpoſals. *Some* ſaw the *finger of God* in them; *others* laughed at and ridiculed them. Nor is there any ground for a compariſon between the fitneſs of miracles in one caſe, as there is in the other. There is not, foraſmuch as force and violence was made uſe of in order to propagate *Mahometaniſm*; when *no aid* from humane power was admitted to recommend *Chriſtianity*. The method of propagating the one had all the marks of *impoſture* in it, and therefore rendered extraordinary interpoſals quite unneceſſary; whereas a great many external diſadvantages attended the other, and therefore ſuch tokens of divine approbation became a proper teſtimony.

PERHAPS *Matt.* xxiv. 24. may be objected, as intimating that *falſe prophets* may work miracles for the ſupport of an *impoſture:* becauſe it ſays, *that there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that* (*if poſſible*) *they ſhall deceive the very elect.*

BUT to this I would reply, that the *ſigns* and *wonders* there mentioned, cannot by any means be referred to *real* miracles; but muſt intend *trick*, and

† John iv. 1.

juggle,

juggle, or *mere* deception: and ſo belong to the nature of thoſe *lying* or *deceptious* miracles, ſigns, and wonders, mentioned, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9. They indeed *artfully* performed things which aſtoniſhed the people, and ſo made theſe the *ſtandards** or *ſigns* of their commiſſion.—But they had not the *real power*, (the δυναμις) which is mentioned, when the power *itſelf* is related in conjunction with *ſigns*, and *wonders*, and is *diſtinguiſhed* from what it was deſigned to witneſs or teſtify. See *Acts* ii. 22. when *Peter* thus addreſſes the Jews, *Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; Jeſus of Nazareth a man approved, or rather*, demonſtrated *of God, among you by miracles*, (δυναμεσι) *and wonders, and ſigns.*

And ſo the *plea* of ſome who have wrought *real* miracles in the name of Chriſt, but who have afterwards become *apoſtates*, theſe are repreſented making their plea as *ſtrong* as poſſible, *Matt.* vii. 22.—and in thy name have done many wonderful works: (δυναμεις πολλας) i. e. *many real miracles.*

Now if the *falſe* Chriſts, and *falſe* Prophets could have wrought *real* miracles, as ſigns or atteſtations of their divine miſſion, I do not ſee what occaſion there was, for that expreſſion, *if poſſible*, † which at the ſame time it denotes the height of the deception, it intimates a *diſtinction* to be made by the careful examiner; or, that the deception was diſcoverable: which it could not be, if the miracles were *real.*

Nor is it any objection, that the word uſed to ſignify a *banner*, *ſtandard*, or *ſign* of a man's *commiſſion*, or of his family or *nobility*, is uſed to expreſs the miracles which our Lord did: ‖ foraſmuch as they were evidently intended to anſwer this very purpoſe. And he all along teaches men, that the *power itſelf* was from God; ſo manifeſtly from him, that he could ſay, *my Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; i. e. the power is the very ſame; my miracles have

* Σημεια, vexillum, inſigne nobilitatis. *Hedericus* de verb.
† Ει δυνατον. ‖ Σημεια.

the

the very complexion of all the known and allowed operations of my Father.—

Mr. *Chubb*'s ſuppoſition of other inviſible agents beſides God which *can*, and *do*, at leaſt, *p.* 12. [I ſuppoſe he means, which *do*, or which *can*, at leaſt] act upon this globe, and his reaſoning upon that ſuppoſition, cannot ſtand for much; upon his own principles, Sect. III. foraſmuch, as *neither the* negative *nor the* affirmative *ſide of the queſtion is to be taken for granted in order to prove any point, becauſe nothing can* certainly *be concluded from either, ſeeing that would be to draw* certain *concluſions from* uncertain *principles*, p. 13. Beſides, *as we are in the dark, as to what* kind *or* degree *of power they are capable of exerciſing*, Sect. IV. to reaſon and argue upon theſe ſubjects, is *mere* hypotheſis. And ſo I am of opinion Mr. *Chubb* muſt alſo own that to be, *viz.* of *vicious* inviſible agents [allowing that there are ſuch] exerting their powers in order to recommend a ſcheme of truth, as *divine*; which ſeems to be the argument of *p.* 52, 53. compared. It is not enough to ſay, they are not *neceſſarily vitious*.—And it is a romantic and wild ſuppoſition, *that ſuch motives may* intervene, *as may become a ground or reaſon to them to* do good *in* ſome *inſtances, and thereby act* contrary *to their* general *character*. Nor is there any thing *analogous* to *this* to be found among wicked men, though Mr. *Chubb* ſays that there is. A *ſcheme of truth* calculated to promote the welfare of mankind, is of *too much* importance, and muſt be ſeen to be *too extenſive* in its tendency and influence, to become the bleſſing or good, which an *evil* or *vicious* being would take pains to recommend; or, exert his powers and capacities in atteſting the *divinity* of. Foraſmuch, as [upon the ſuppoſition of vitious inviſible agents acting upon this our globe] we may be aſſured, that they would never employ themſelves in thus offering the greateſt violence to themſelves, *unnaturally* ſubverting their own dominion; ſince, they muſt know, *that every*

kingdom divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand. The ſuppoſition, that the moſt benign and friendly exertions of power in *healing*, *miraculouſly* healing the *maladies* and *diſeaſes* of men, were the effects of *vitious*, inviſible agents, became the mouth of a malicious, wicked, prejudiced *Phariſee*,* much better than the pen of the *reputedly* virtuous and moral Mr. *Chubb*.—

And inaſmuch as Mr. *Chubb* has profeſſedly owned the divinity of the true Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, I am perſuaded that he has embraced it with a confidence free from any jealouſy that he may poſſibly have been impoſed upon by the deceptious atteſtations of *evil* ſpirits. He muſt know, that the *Chriſtian revelation*, is, in its ſpirit and temper, in its whole deſign and tendency, *ſo* beneficial to mankind, that to ſuppoſe any *inviſible* agent concerned in recommending it, is every way ſufficient to ſupport the *moſt amiable* ideas of his virtue and friendſhip.—Or, indeed if Mr. *Chubb* could ſuppoſe an *evil* inviſible agent, upon ſome tranſient thought or ſudden flight of fancy diſpoſed to do good, and to promote the very *reverſe* diſpoſition to his own, Mr. *Chubb* could not ſurely imagine him any other than a *convert* to virtue: *eſpecially*, if he ſhould continue for *ten*, *twenty*, or *thirty* years carrying on the *god-like* deſign: and after the ſpread of this revelation, ſo atteſted, he or they concerned in ſuch atteſtations, ſhould never exert *equal* power for near 1700 years, in order to weaken its force, and to ſhew it was *deceptious*; ſomething only done out of *humour* and *whim*, and not from full ſatisfaction and an habitual love for truth!—

There is then no more danger of men being impoſed upon by the exertion of extraordinary power from *vitious* inviſible agents, thereby recommending a *beneficial* revelation to mankind, as *p.* 53. would inſinuate, than there is of *darkneſs* becoming reconciled to dwell with *light*.—

* Matt. xii. 24.

But

BUT in this *Diſcourſe on Miracles*, written by Mr. *Chubb*, he has given us a *ſample* how men may *deceive* and *impoſe* upon one another: For he has laid down his *own definitions*, without ſupporting them; then he has made ſuppoſitions, for which, he acknowledges, he has no manner of ground or foundation; and upon theſe he has ſuper-induced arguments *pro* and *con*, with a manifeſt deſign of having them applied to the *Chriſtian revelation* and *miracles*. And in this flouriſh, would ſo deceive the eye, as to induce us to think he was *in earneſt* favouring the world with ſtating the doctrine of miracles.

SECT. V.

Miracles do not take away free agency, or offer any violence to the freedom of man: but have a beneficial tendency.

BUT in *p.* 24. we are told, *that for any to ſay, it is* morally *unfit for God to* ſuffer *his creatures to delude or injure one another, is the ſame as to ſay, that it is* morally *unfit for God to call* free *creatures into being:* Which is a concluſion drawn from this propoſition, *viz. Men will be at liberty whilſt they are* agents *to exerciſe their natural abilities in ſerving what* purpoſes *they pleaſe.* Take away *that liberty, and their agency* ceaſes, *or is* deſtroyed.

IT ſhould be firſt proved, that any *real* miracle has ever been wrought by any creature, in order to *delude* and *injure* other creatures, before any thing need be ſaid to account for it—but that no miracle wrought by God himſelf, either for the *ſuccour* or *puniſhment* of a people, has any *compulſive* power or force upon the will, to injure its freedom or deſtroy the ſelf-motive faculty, is evident in the caſe of PHARAOH and his people, who continued to harden their hearts, and reſiſt the demands of *Jehovah*, though atteſted with plagues, and then with deliver-

ances

ances from them, upon their repentance. So that no miracle can be ſuppoſed to be wrought, that can militate *with God's bringing free agents into being*. Inaſmuch then as free agency cannot be deſtroyed by real miracles, or the ſupernatural effects of divine power; an *appearance of power*, a mere ſhadow of it, cannot poſſibly deſtroy this *freedom*. So that in the nature of things, creatures cannot ſo *delude* or *injure* one another.

MEN have indeed been ſuffered ſo far to injure one another by *wounds*, *bruiſes*, &c. as to deprive of the uſe of reaſon, and ſo have been ſuffered to deſtroy the moral agency of ſuch their fellow-creatures: nay, to take away their very lives. But this has nothing to do with miracles, nor with the *injury* and *deluſion* ariſing from them. And the reaſon of ſuch *permiſſion* will be well accounted for, when Mr. *Chubb*'s *True Goſpel* has its full compaſs, *viz. when the appointed time comes in which God will judge the world in righteouſneſs by Jeſus Chriſt*.

ON the other hand, miracles have had the moſt BENEFICIAL effects. *Real miracles*, have been thoſe grand events in the chronology or annals of the ages, to which we owe the higheſt diſcoveries of a particular providence, or the certainty of the ſpecial interpoſals of God in behalf of his creatures.

So the people of God, the children of Iſrael had the doctrine of a particular providence written as with a *ſun-beam*, in their deliverance out of Egypt, in their being led through the [illegible]; in their ſettlement in *Canaan*; and their [illegible] here from their ſurrounding enemies.

To recover the effaced notions and ideas of providence, the dominion of Jehovah was revived, in the miracle of *Elijah*, at the remarkable conteſt between him and the prieſts of *Baal*.

AND in that corrupt ſtate of *Judaiſm*, which had obtained at the *incarnation* of the WORD; how manifeſt were the proofs of God's providence

in

in the miracles wrought by Jeſus and his Apoſtles? which miracles confirmed, [by giving *ſamples*] that very doctrine he taught, of God's extending his care to every individual who relied on his care, in the way of their duty. They, the diſciples of Jeſus, ſaw evidently the *much more*, in their being *preſerved* and *protected* when ſent out to preach the Goſpel. They found, that if God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, he did *much more* clothe them; if God did notice the life of a ſparrow, he did *much more* notice their lives, who were employed in ſetting up the Kingdom of his Son in the world.

To convince them of his fatherly care and protection, they are to make no proviſion for their journeying, neither ſolicite the favour of any man by the way, *Luke* x. 4. but to rely wholly on his ſpecial providence, who had aſſured them of his friendly regards. And could they hear him ſay, *Behold I give unto you power to tread on ſerpents and ſcorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing ſhall by any means, hurt you!* Could they hear this, find it true, in fact, and yet not be convinced of God's interpoſing in the behalf of his creatures?—or can any read the account, attend to the miracles, and not believe the doctrine of providence they are bought to confirm? The very prayer our Lord taught his diſciples, and his reaſoning from it, ſhews, the compaſſion of our heavenly Father to be *much more* than that of earthly parents, who will in conſequence of humble and earneſt ſupplication give good things, or the holy ſpirit, to them that ſupplicate for them.

And *all this*, without offering the leaſt violence to the freedom of man.

SECT.

SECT VI.

Another view of Miracles as giving a ſenſible proof *of more than power.*

BUT it is yet ſaid, *Miracles are* direct *evidences, and give a* ſenſible *proof, not of the veracity, but only of the* power *which attends the actor; and therefore, any other kind of evidence which may be ſuppoſed to ariſe from them, can be only by deduction, as it is the reſult of* juſt *reaſoning upon the caſe*, p. 8.

AND Mr. *Chubb* has diſtinguiſhed *evidence* into two kinds, *viz. teſtimony* and *deduction*. By *Teſtimony* he means, "an intelligent being affirming "or denying a propoſition in debate, either by "ſpeech, writing, or otherwiſe. And by *De-* "*duction* is meant, when that which is brought "as evidence requires our comparing of ideas, and "from thence collecting or deducing the truth or "falſeneſs of the point in queſtion."

MIRACLES have been ſaid, by others, as well as Mr. *Chubb*, to be *only* evidences of power. But this proves nothing. They ſeem capable of both the kinds of evidence, *viz. teſtimony* and *deduction*; and of giving a ſenſible proof of *goodneſs* and *veracity* as well as power. What if an *Egyptian King* diſobey a meſſage ſent to him from God; and the firſt ſenſible proofs, ſhould be *only* of power? if this King by *deduction* is brought ſo far to his ſenſes, as to be convinced that the effects were wrought by the Being ſaid to ſend the meſſage, and ſhould hereupon ſupplicate a deliverance from thoſe effects of power: And if the *Meſſengers* ſhould ſay to this King, the plagues brought upon thee ſhall be removed, at ſuch a time, that thou mayeſt know, *that none is like unto the Lord our God?** Then,

* Exod. viii. 8, 10.

the

he performance of this promiſe, by a miraculous removal of the plagues, is as direct an evidence of *veracity* as it is of power, and as ſenſible a proof of *goodneſs* as it is of either. The King and all his people can no ſooner ſee the miraculous diſplay of power in their *relief*, but a joyous ſenſation muſt ariſe from the kindneſs immediately felt in the interpoſal. And if an *extraordinary* prophet ſhould come among men, and declare that God had ſent him to be the *light* and the *life* of the world; and he ſhould, as a teſtimony of the truth of what he ſaid, give *ſight* to the blind, and *raiſe the dead* to life again, would not this be *more* than a ſenſible proof of power? Here would, in theſe miracles, be manifeſt *ſamples* of the truth of the doctrine he taught.* Should he declare that God had committed *all* judgment to him, and that the time is coming in which all that are in their graves ſhall hear his voice and ſhall come forth, they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation:—The dead actually hearing his voice in ſundry inſtances, gives an irrefragable evidence of *truth* as well as of *power*; equally tends to conciliate the minds of men; the *ſamples* agreeing ſo exactly with the doctrine of his being the *reſurrection* and *the life*. And when ſuch a *being* has aſſerted, that the *end* of his miſſion was to *reveal* or *declare* the Father to the children of men, nothing can be more natural than to expect *moral perfections* would be diſplayed by him in the ſtrongeſt light! and when every extraordinary *effect* which he produced had *goodneſs*, *tenderneſs* and *compaſſion* expreſſed in them, (except only *one* or *two* that perhaps gave chiefly a ſenſible proof of judicial *power*) then there is not *only* a ſenſible proof of power but alſo of *goodneſs*. And if relieving men under their *pains* and *maladies*, was expreſſive of compaſſion, then that ſame perſon,

* See more to this purpoſe in Dr. TURNBULL on miracles.

whoſe *True Goſpel* Mr. *Chubb* has aſſerted, did by his miraculous works give as direct evidences of *compaſſion*, as he did of *power*.

If the *one* or *two* inſtances referred to, *as exceptions*, ſhould be carefully obſerved, they perhaps will be thought to be evidences of *veracity* as well as power, and indicate the authority he was to be inveſted with, as *ſole judge*; or that God will moſt certainly judge the world by him—or, that he will approve or condemn, reward or puniſh every man as he has, or has not conformed his affections and actions to that righteous law which is founded in the reaſon of things.* So that although this *ſort* of miracle comes not ſo properly under that *kind* of evidence called *teſtimony*, yet it muſt be allowed to come under the head of *deduction*: as in the known caſes of the *fig-tree*, and the *Gadarene's ſwine*, to which I now have a reference.

Nor do I ſee, that Mr. *Chubb* has excluded this ſort of evidence from the head of *teſtimony*, ſince he has defined teſtimony *to be an intelligent being vouching for, or denying a propoſition by ſpeech, writing, or otherwiſe*. And if ſo, then an intelligent being may vouch for, or deny a propoſition in debate, by the exertion of power; as was the caſe, when the fire of the Lord fell and conſumed the ſacrifice, in the conteſt between *Elijah*, and the prophets of *Baal*.†—Actions have, no doubt, a voice; and are capable of indicating ſomething elſe beſides the *quantity of power* expreſſed in them. *Nay*, they may give in as *plain* teſtimony, as ſpeech, or writing can do: for whether is it eaſier to ſay, thy ſins are forgiven thee, or to prove they are, by removing puniſhment or pain by an exertion of power?

All this *Writer* has ſaid about inviſible agents, their degree of capacity, their integrity, or the permiſſion of God to exerciſe power for the deluſion of his creatures, ſeems to be only an *ens imaginationis*;

* True Goſpel, *p.* 40. †1 Kings xviii. 24, 28. compared.

for

for neither the *light of nature*, or any *divine revelation* admitted of their ever being ſuffered to expreſs miraculous power in order to *delude* and *deceive* mankind. There is no one caſe mentioned where there was a pretence of diſputing the claims of the Deity, that any thing of a *real* miracle was ever wrought in the conteſt, on the ſide of falſehood. And for my part, I freely own I am perſuaded that none ever was wrought in the world. This will therefore excuſe me taking notice in my next *ſection*, of what has been introduced under this head, which according to Mr *Chubb* is all *hypotheſis*; and of which he has ſo fully cleared himſelf from believing any thing.

SECT. VII.

The infrequency *of miracles no proof againſt the doctrine of them, nor of a revelation atteſted by them.*

ANOTHER difficulty about *real* miracles is put, *p.* 26. and onward, from their not being given ſo *frequently* as occaſions require. *For if miracles are at* any time *uſed to convince men of the* divine *original of a revelation*; *then, when a number of them grow* ſceptical and incredulous, *as to the truth of thoſe facts, and conſequently are* doubtful *with regard to the divinity of that revelation*; *when this is the caſe, then* new *miracles become as* uſeful, *and ſerve the* ſame *purpoſes as thoſe before*, viz. *to work the* conviction *of mankind. And it would be* equally *as* kind *and* good *in God to give them in the* latter, *as in the* former *caſe. But whereas he* does not *do it in the* latter, *this affords an argument* againſt *his having done it in the* former.

PERHAPS this reaſoning may not be *at all* concluſive; for if there were ſuch *reaſons* ſubſiſting at the firſt publication and ſpread of a revelation; which afterwards ceaſed to be reaſons, then the *in-*

frequency of miracles will be no argument againſt them.

And thus it appears with regard to the *chriſtian revelation*, as atteſted by miracles. For *Jeſus* taught *that he came from God*: that *whatever he ſaw the Father do, thoſe things he did likewiſe:* that *he came in his* Father's *name.* It therefore became him to teſtify to theſe things by exertions of *ſimilar* power. For theſe doctrines, *viz.* of his being *ſent of God*; that he came in his Father's name—and that he had a glory with him *before the world was*; that he had *all judgment* committed to him; *&c.* would not have been ſufficiently attended to by the Jews; no, nor *proved*, without he had wrought ſome wonderful works among them, to which he might appeal. *Beſides*, their not having, during his public miniſtry and for years after, any records of his life and doctrine, the miracles were a *ſeries of atteſtations* that became proper to employ their *attention* and *enquiry*, as well as become a part of thoſe *records*, whenever they ſhould be made. And in aſmuch as he authorized his Apoſtles to recommend his religion, by working miracles *in his name*, this the perſon he pretended to be, both to *Jews*, became a *continued* teſtimony in favour of his being and *others*; the capacity of working *like-miracles* remaining with his Apoſtles after his aſcenſion. A circumſtance *peculiar* to the firſt publication of the Goſpel; and which anſwered all the ends that were requiſite, till the *ſacred Records* were compleat. Nor does it appear that the power of working miracles was intended to laſt longer; becauſe none but the Apoſtles were capable of imparting the *Chariſmata*. But then, the *reaſon* of miracles muſt ceaſe, when the record and the apoſtolic age was finiſhed. A ſeries of wonderful exertions of power for *thirty* or more years having been made after the aſcenſion of Jeſus, nothing

thing more ſeemed requiſite to confirm and eſtabiſh the divinity of the revelation.

When therefore the Hiſtory was compleated, and the narratives of theſe miraculous exertions of power entered into the *record*, for the veracity of which, there was an appeal to the exerciſe of this *ſame kind* of power for *thirty* years; the reaſon, as I ſaid, for the repetition of miracles apparently ceaſed. If men will not receive a doctrine every way worthy of God, which fairly addreſſes the underſtanding, and with the nobleſt ſimplicity recommends piety and virtue, love of God and others: which gives the moſt ſublime views of the moral character and government of God: if men will not attend to ſuch a revelation,—*acts of power*, though the moſt miraculous, ſeem no way calculated to convince and engage. For if men will not believe in *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, I mean in the writings of the *New Teſtament*, neither would they believe, *though one roſe from the dead.*

Besides, they who wrought the miracles, were the *very* perſons who received the doctrine from God, and who were commiſſioned to teach it to mankind; it therefore appeared in the moſt unexceptionable light, that ſuch *extraordinary effects* ſhould be wrought by them, as *ſeals* of their miſſion: which reaſon, has never took place ſince the Apoſtles; and as it has not, I think it no manner of proof, that becauſe *miracles* have not been wrought ſince thoſe ſufficient reaſons for them have ceaſed, that therefore they *never* were wrought, when the moſt apt circumſtances and ſubſtantial reaſons had actually a place. We have now no men among us, who have *any* claim to a divine miſſion, as the Apoſtles of our Lord had: None, who have divine, apoſtolical claims; and therefore no manner of occaſion for any ſuch *credentials*. But we have writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, giving us a moſt *rational account* of the manner in which the Chriſtian doctrine was firſt publiſhed and propagated. And the miracles recorded

are

are worthy the moſt *wiſe* and *rational* of the humane family; leave no room to ſuſpect *deluſion* and *impoſture*; are all ſuited in their nature, as well as in the *manner* and *circumſtances* in which they were wrought, to point out the doctrine which they atteſted, to be from God.

To *object* againſt the *reality* of miracles, becauſe of the *infrequency* of them, ſeems quite unnatural: foraſmuch, as the *frequency* of miracles would deſtroy the force and influence of them, upon the minds of men. *Beſides*, the *ſceptical* and *incredulous*, who refuſe to receive a *doctrine* that has all the internal marks of its being from God, only becauſe they cannot account for the *way* and *manner* wherein ſuch miraculous impartments were made; ſuch, would retain their *ſcepticiſm* and *incredulity*, were they to be favoured or indulged with the obſervation of miracles; becauſe, their being preſent at the working of miracles, could no more diſcover to them the *way* and *manner* of the operation, than reading the *record*; nor perhaps any thing near ſo much:—the *ſurprize* and *aſtoniſhment*, rendering the mind leſs fit for a calm examination.—

So that all the *danger* is prevented, which Mr. *Chubb* in *p.* 72, 73. has ſuppoſed to ariſe from the *imagination*'s being too ſtrongly affected.

The doctrine of Chriſtianity has nothing in it to encourage *enthuſiaſm*, or inſpire men with *pride* and *vanity*. There are no extraordinary impartments of power promiſed, none which have the leaſt tendency to *intoxicate* the minds of men, from any ſpecial mark of being *heavenly* meſſengers: which indeed might become the caſe, if miracles were to be wrought in favour of every *ſceptic* and *unbeliever*.

The ceaſing of miracles therefore upon the finiſhing of the apoſtolic age, diſcovers *wiſdom* and *care* in preventing thoſe objections, that a *ſceptic* or *unbeliever* might make againſt them.

Mr. *Chubb*, I hope, will not require the *repetition* of miracles in order to convine men of the divine original

ginal of a revelation; ſince he has reported this as *part of the true Goſpel*, viz. that Chriſt was *ſent of God*; that the *great end* and *profeſſed deſign* of his coming into the world was to *ſave men's ſouls*; and that he gave his life a *ranſom* for many; that accordingly, he is appointed the *ſole judge* of men! Since Mr. *Chubb* has owned theſe doctrines to be *true*, he himſelf cannot want the *repetition* of miracles to convince him of the truth of them. And methinks if the miracles ought to be repeated *once* or *twice* in every age, then the *incarnation* of the *Word*, his *ſufferings* and *death*, his *reſurrection* and *aſcenſion*, ſhould likewiſe be as frequently repeated; foraſmuch, as what renders the *one*, renders the *other* neceſſary alſo, or requiſite.

SECT. VIII.

An objection againſt the revelation, on account of the time of its record, conſidered.

AGAINST what I have now offered, we may place Mr. *Chubb*'s reaſoning, *p.* 80. and onward; where he ſays, *Facts may be entered upon record at the* time *of performance, and thoſe records may be made* ſo *public at the* time *and* place *of action, as may not only* diſpoſe, *but render it very* eaſy *for inquiſitive perſons who live upon the ſpot, to examine the caſe* throughly, *by examining both the* record, *and the* evidences *of the facts which are to ſupport the* credit *of the record*; *or the facts may be entered upon record*, ten, *or* twenty, *or* thirty *years after performance, and may be made public in places* far diſtant *from the place of action, or be kept as a* ſacred treaſure *in the hands of believers. The* former *of theſe very much* ſtrengthens, *and the* latter *very much* weakens, *the credit of ſuch records.*

WITH regard to the Chriſtian Revelation, what I have already offered, may perhaps take off pretty much of the force of this objection againſt the ſtrength of the evidence. It does not appear at all requiſite

that

that a record ſhould be made under the ſpace of twenty or thirty years, (*i. e.* ſuppoſing the Apoſtles continue upon the ſpot) foraſmuch, as the ſucceſſive *train* of miracles, all referring to the *character* and miſſion of Jeſus, and wrought in ſupport of the doctrine, were a conſtant evidence ſufficient to engage inquiſitive perſons who lived upon the ſpot to examine.

NAY, if any credit is to be given to the accounts of the antients, St. *Matthew*'s record or Goſpel was written within about *eight* years after the aſcenſion, upon his leaving Judea; as Mr. *Jones* has obſerved, and to which I refer Mr. *Chubb.**—But upon the ſuppoſition that the canon was not compleated, nor ſo much as a Goſpel among them for the ſpace of *ten*, *twenty*, or *thirty* years, inaſmuch as whilſt the Apoſtles lived, they were capable of working miracles, the *record* was not ſo requiſite. Moreover,

THESE expreſſions of power, muſt ever be looked upon as they really were, the expreſſions of *divine power*; and therefore, would diſcover *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* likewiſe. So that the Apoſtles, whilſt teaching the Chriſtian doctrine, as a revelation from God, diſplayed all the evidences of the *truth* of it, that could render any doctrine *credible:* inaſmuch as thoſe *extraordinary effects* which they were continually producing, ever afforded the moſt conſpicuous diſplays of *Deity*.

TO inſinuate that no *record* was entered till *ten*, *twenty*, or *thirty* years after performance; and that too *not entered upon the ſpot*, but only in places *far diſtant* from the place of action, is a groundleſs inſinuation, and not to be proved. For it is allowed by good *authorities* that St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel, in the Jews language, before he left *Paleſtine*. The learned Mr. *Lardner* in his *Credibility of the Goſpel-Hiſtory*, P. II. B. 1. p. 245. tells us from *Papias*, that *Matthew writ the divine oracles in the*

* *Jones*'s Canon, Vol. III. Part IV. p. 15, 16, 17, compared.

Hebrew

Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he was able. And from *Irenæus*, p. 353. that *Matthew then among the Jews, writ a Goſpel in their language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Goſpel at Rome, and founding a church there.*

THERE was all the opportunity given for examination, that any rational and inquiſitive man could deſire. The Apoſtles of Jeſus, many of them, *continuing on the ſpot*, where Jeſus had performed all the great tranſactions they aſſert he did perform; and *myriads* of the Jews were convinced of the truth of the doctrine.

AND that no poſſible objection might remain againſt the *credibility* of the Goſpel, the *records* are made before the deſtruction of the Jewiſh *city* and *polity*; and the prophetic account of it delivered by *Jeſus* himſelf, as inſerted in thoſe records. Which prophetic accounts, were not only delivered to the inhabitants of *Judea*, but to the *ſtrangers* ſcattered abroad. Too notorious were the intimations, not to have ſhocked the *faith* and reſolution of the *believers* [ſuppoſing the records to have been kept only by them] if there had been any *fallacy* or *colluſion* in the *narratives*. Nor would they have thought the treaſure *ſacred*, had there been any *known falſehoods* in the records.

UPON the whole, there is no hiſtory in the world can demand credit, that has been wrote before the age we live in, and which relates to facts done in a diſtant part of the world, if the Goſpel has not *ſufficient* marks of credibility. No other hiſtory can boaſt of being made up of *facts*, which every *wiſe* and *virtuous* man may ſee himſelf *intereſted* in, upon the ſuppoſition of their being true. Every expreſſion of power recorded in this ſacred hiſtory, evinces the divine miſſion of *Jeſus*, whom Mr. *Chubb* owns to be the *ſole judge* of men. A conſideration *too extenſive* to exclude any man from finding himſelf greatly intereſted in thoſe facts.—

And as Mr. *Chubb* argues from *analogy*, about *deluſions* being permitted in the world, ſo I am tempted to think, that would he impartially attend to the account, which [what we call] *divine revelation* gives us of miracles, a great deal of his *hypotheſis*, would be ſtripped of what is *formidable* in it.

He would plainly perceive, that no real miracle has ever been wrought to atteſt a falſehood, either by inviſible agents, or by men.—That upon every *pretence* of working ſuch miracles the fallacy has been detected: witneſs, the Egyptian magicians; the four hundred and fifty prophets or prieſts of *Baal*, who *moſt probably*, had made uſe of great deceptions, in order to keep up the reputation of their *Idol*; and had perſuaded the people to conſent to ſuch an extraordinary or miraculous way of deciding the controverſy; which they ſurely would not have done, had they not been ſo far deluded as to imagine their God *Baal* able to defend his own character. Nor ſurely, would the *prieſts* have took ſo much pains to invoke him from morning till noon, and to cut and mangle their fleſh in order to prevail with him, if they had not been in earneſt.

And finally, if the real *miracles* be carefully attended to, as recorded in the *Sacred Writings*, we ſhall find, a reaſon aſſignable for them, worthy of the extraordinary interpoſition. So it appears, in the affair of *Moſes* and *Aaron*'s delivering the children of Iſrael out of Egypt: they manifeſtly aſſerting the ſupremacy of *Jehovah*, and denying the divinity of the Gods of Egypt.—So, in the famous conteſt between *Elijah* and the *Prieſts* of Baal; when the King and People had degenerated from the true religion, and introduced falſe Gods, contrary to the known eſtabliſhed laws of their country—and likewiſe, there appeared the higheſt reaſon for miracles, when the Word took on him the form of a ſervant, and taught, *that his miſſion was from God.*

SECT.

SECT. IX.

On the Revelation not being made univerſal.

BY *a divine revelation we are not to underſtand, ſuch public revelations, as imply a divine application to the mind of* each individual *of our ſpecies, by which are* revealed *to each individual the truths intended to be made known. For though this may be called a* public *revelation, as it is given univerſally to all, yet, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it would be a* particular private *revelation, becauſe it is given particularly to each individual. And ſuch a revelation, whether it be conſidered as public or private, is foreign to the preſent enquiry; becauſe the caſe of miracles, in our* preſent view *of them, would not come into the queſtion.—It is only upon a ſuppoſition that a revelation of which it is ſaid that it is divine ſhould at any time be given or publiſhed by the mouth or pen of* one *man,* to *others, and for* their *uſe, and real miracles ſhould be wrought by the* reporter, *and ſhould be appealed to by him as* evidences *of the* divinity *of his miſſion; then, and in that caſe, the enquiry is, what* kind *or* degree *of evidence ariſes* (not *to the* revealer, *but to* others) *from thoſe miracles, in favour of the divinity of that revelation,* p. 6, 7.

AND Mr. *Chubb*, in oppoſition to the argument drawn [from the different capacities and different degrees of happineſs creatures are formed for] in defence of the revelation being made to ſome, has this remarkable paſſage, *p.* 47. *And as it was not for the ſake of* variety *that God made ſo* many *different ſpecies of beings, but that a* much greater good *might be carried on thereby; ſo if a* more general good *would be carried on, by a revelation's being given* partially *to* ſome, *than it would be by its being given* generally *to all, if* this *were the caſe, then the* caſes *under conſideration would be* parallel; *but this does not* appear *to be the caſe, and therefore,* thoſe caſes *in point of argument*

admit of no *compariſon*; *that is, there is the* appearance *at leaſt of great partiality, and a defect of benevolence in* one *caſe*; *whereas there is* no ſuch *appearance with reſpect to the other.*

WHAT Mr. *Chubb* means by ſaying, *that it was not for the ſake of variety that God made ſo many different ſpecies of beings, but that a much greater good might be carried on thereby*; I do not well underſtand.

IT is certain that *variety* enters eſſentially into the ideas we have of beauty. For ſays an *excellent Moraliſt*,* "What we call beautiful in objects ſeems to "be in a compound *ratio* of *uniformity* and *variety*: "ſo that where the uniformity of bodies is equal, "the beauty is as the variety; and where the vari- "ety is equal, the beauty is as the uniformity."

BUT *beſides*, "The *variety* that there is both in the "material and immaterial productions of almighty "power, is the grand evidence of the efficient cauſe "being *ſovereignly free*. For power operating by "the ſame neceſſity with which the Being itſelf "does exiſt, muſt be incapable of acting by dire- "ction, or under the conduct of judgment and "thought: becauſe it is neceſſary in its action, and "no thought can diverſify it unleſs there be freedom "in the agent, *i. e.* ſome principle of *ſuſpending* the "degree of its exertion, or in other caſes, of extend- "ing it ſo, that its effects ſhall be more or leſs ex- "cellent; for higher and lower degrees of excellen- "cy muſt have their reaſon, and that reaſon muſt "immediately be in the different degrees of power; "for that alone being it which does *act externally*, "from hence muſt be deduced the reaſon of diverſi- "fied productions. And at the ſame time, the "different exerciſe of power being from the diffe- "rent degrees of its exertion, thoſe different degrees "imply, both wiſdom and freedom, or ſelf-deter- "mination."†

* *Hutcheſon*'s Inquiry, *&c.* p. 17.

† So the worthy Mr. *Jacob Ball*, a MS.

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WHAT ſhall we ſay then to Mr. *Chubb*'s premiſes, *viz. that it was not for the ſake of* VARIETY, *that God made ſo many different ſpecies of beings?*— May we but ſuppoſe the works of creation intended to diſplay the perfections of the great Former, then *variety* being eſſential to beauty, muſt enter into the idea of the Creator; ſo that in ſome ſenſe it muſt be owned, that it was for the ſake of variety.—*Again*, Without variety no evidence could have been given of God's being a *ſovereignly free agent*, without which *idea*, the ſenſe of obligation would have been darkned, if not wholly loſt; and beings produced, would not have had ſuch reaſon of gratitude. For, *it was no favour in God, if he could not but thus cauſe my exiſting with ſuch capacities, and under ſuch advantageous circumſtances: and therefore no thanks would be due to him for that I am and have.* Let Mr. *Chubb* now ſhew, how this *much greater good* ſtands oppoſed to *variety*.

WHY the revelation given to ſome and not to all, may not agree with this procedure of the all-wiſe and ſovereignly free Being, I cannot diſcern. There ſeems to be no more reaſon to doubt of its being a divine revelation, from its being made to ſome and not to all, than there is of the greater degrees of natural abilities and capacities ſome men enjoy than others, not being from God.* Nor is it in Mr. *Chubb*'s power to prove, that the revelation being in the hands of only part of the humane family is not as apt a means of producing *a more general good*, as the extraordinary natural abilities and extraordinary natural light that ſome men have enjoyed above the reſt of the humane family are to produce *a more general good*.—Why ſhould the latter promiſe fairer for promoting the end than the former? The abuſe and perverſion of the *light of nature* has been as manifeſt, and as extenſive as the corruptions of the *revelation*. And the *revelation* has all the marks of *good-will* to

* See the learned Dr. SYKES's *Prin. and Connex.* p. 277.

men,

men, when conſidered in its true light, that any could ever pretend to diſcover, in the moſt *eminent* diſciples of the light of nature. So that for any thing that appears to the contrary, the caſes under conſideration are *parallel*. There is not any thing that will bear the name of *partiality* in God, either in the one caſe, or in the other; but he is manifeſted and declared under both views to be wiſe, and ſovereignly free. Nor is there any, the leaſt, impeachment of his goodneſs; for, the revelation, no more than the light of nature, ſuppoſes God to be an hard maſter: but on the contrary, with the greateſt clearneſs aſſerts, *that no man ſhall be called to an account for more Talents than are vouchſafed him.*

THE charge againſt the revelation, of having the appearance, at leaſt, of *great partiality*, and a *defect of benevolence*, is not to be ſupported.

THAT *third part of the True Goſpel* which Mr. *Chubb* has acknowledged, *viz.* that *of Chriſt's being appointed the ſole judge of men*, ſeems to have a benevolent aſpect on the humame family, as it deſcribes or implies in it, a *deliverance* from the dominion of death; and this, in purſuance of the *divine miſſion* of Jeſus, of his reſurrection from the dead, and inveſtiture with princely power and dominion. And would the humane Mr. *Chubb* have us charge God with *great partiality* and *defect of benevolence*, for having made a revelation of this, to a *part* of the humane family? it being *incapable* of being made to all? [foraſmuch as miracles would then be *naturally* and *neceſſarily* excluded according to Sect. III.] So that *none* muſt have the notice of mercy made to them, becauſe all could not;—but miracles being eſſentially neceſſary to evince *Jeſus* to be appointed of the Father, as *ſole judge* of men, therefore the revelation could only be made to a part of the humane family.—To call this *partiality*, is unkind; and does not at all *ſuit* any juſt idea of obligation. It would ſhew the eye of man to be evil, becauſe the

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eye of heaven is good: and muſt be owned to be, no leſs, *than a charging God fooliſhly.*—

UNDER Mr. *Chubb*'s enquiries about the *divinity* of a revelation, he ſeems to have laid the ſtreſs of the objection *on its being given* only *to ſome, and not to* all, *in* like *circumſtances.* And he puts this as the queſtion, *p.* 65. *whether this* ſingle *circumſtance* againſt *the divinity of* ſuch *a revelation, be of* leſs, *or* equal, *or* ſuperior *weight, than* all *other circumſtances which are offered in* favour *of that revelation.* For, ſays he, *the force of all that has been offered on either ſide of the preſent queſtion terminates in this*, p. 66.

AND p. 68. he ſays, *the point at laſt turns upon this queſtion*, viz. *which of thoſe* two *ways of giving a revelation to the world would* beſt and moſt effectually *anſwer the purpoſe of ſuch a revelation? whether by a divine application* immediately *to ſome* one *or* more *of our ſpecies, and* mediately *by* him, *or* them *to* others, *and by* them, *to* others, *and ſo on?* and p. 69, *but as this queſtion* cannot *well be anſwered, becauſe we* are not *very good judges in the preſent caſe; ſo it may be urged that this* takes off, *or at leaſt very* much weakens *that objection againſt the divinity of a revelation, which ariſes from its* not *being given univerſally to all.*

IF we would have any room at all for miracles, it is plain the revelation they are to atteſt muſt not be made *univerſal*, i. e. *by a divine application immediately made to the mind of every individual of our own ſpecies*; foraſmuch as this would render miracles uſeleſs. And if a revelation cannot be made to ſome one or more of our own ſpecies, and mediately by him or them to others, if it be *inconſiſtent* with the perfections of God to make ſuch a revelation, then miracles themſelves cannot prove any ſuch revelation to be divine.—But, Mr. *Chubb* ſays, that to ſuppoſe God made ſuch a revelation, *is to ſuppoſe him a* perfect ſtranger *to mankind, he well knowing how apt men*

are

are to betray *the truſt repoſed in them, how liable to corrupt whatever is put into their hands, to turn it to their private advantage,* and *to make it ſubſervient to quite contrary purpoſes than what it was intended,* p. 62. the queſtion then is, *whether it is* likely *that ſuch a wiſe and good being as God is, ſhould give a revelation, and* intend *it for a* general *good to mankind, and yet ſhould give it in* ſuch *a way, as that it will be in the* power *and at the* pleaſure *of* one *or a* few *men to prevent* thouſands *and* milions *of others from* ſharing *in the benefits of it?* p. 63.

On which I remark, it ſeems to be evident, that if Jesus Christ or his *Apoſtles* wrought any real miracles in atteſtation of the doctrine they taught, then the revelation was divine, and not univerſal. The reality of the miracles, ſo applied, will prove the divine miſſion of Jeſus, and at the ſame time prove, upon Mr. *Chubb's* own ſcheme, that the revelation could not be made to *all:* foraſmuch as had *all* and *every* individual underſtood by a divine application *immediately* made to them, that *Jeſus Chriſt* or the Word becoming incarnate, *&c.* was the *Sent of God,* and appointed by him as *ſole judge* of men, then miracles would have been needleſs. But this Mr. *Chubb* owns, viz. *that Jeſus Chriſt is appointed the judge of men*; and therefore, as this could only be known by an expreſs revelation, ſo the doctrine, in its own nature, demanded the teſtimony of miracles. And by theſe only, can that *third part* of Mr. *Chubb's True Goſpel* be ſupported.

By the way, Mr. *Chubb* cannot take it amiſs, ſhould I aſk him, " why he believes in Chriſt at " all? what credentials he has to ſupport his belief? " or, let me aſk him whether a perſon whoſe doctrine " appears to be every way worthy of God, and who " affirms that he *is ſent from God,* whether ſuch a " man is the *more* or the *leſs* to be credited for ha- " ving his miſſion confirmed by ſuch acts of power, " wiſdom and goodneſs, which apparently claim

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" no other than the SUPREME BEING for their " author or origine?"—

AGAIN, the *non-univerſality* of the ſpread of the Chriſtian Doctrine, ſtands in full agreement with the perfections of the Deity, and the make of man; for the very reaſon that man's freedom of agency can not receive any violence from the divine impartments, ſo the revelation could not be made univerſal.

THE reaſon will be obvious when we conſider, that it was not any ſort of men that were fit to be entruſted with the *Sacred Depoſitum*; but they were *choſen men*;—Nor had *Judas* any ſooner become a ſlave to his covetouſneſs, but he became thereby incapable of attending the buſineſs of an Apoſtle—And when his place became vacant in the holy college, it was ſupplied by their firſt nominating two men of the beſt character, and then by prayer and lots, referring it to the determination of that Being, *who knows the hearts of all men*—So that as all men were not fit for the impartment, it could not be made to all.

AN objection would indeed lie againſt the revelation, if it was not worthy the reception of all men, if it did not indiſcriminately expreſs the *good will* of the Deity. Nor can any one of the *favours* of God be univerſally received, attended to, and applied to its proper uſe, till all men become virtuous; till all are honeſt; till *truth* and *goodneſs* are the objects of univerſal eſteem. But will any man from hence ſay, that *this* and *that* advantage vouchſafed to mankind are not from God, come not down from the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift flows? And if neither Mr. *Chubb* nor any other wiſe and ſober man can deny but that the Chriſtian doctrine or True Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, would be univerſally received, if all men were wiſe and good; or, that it is *worthy* the reception of all wiſe and good men, then its want of being univerſally

made, is no manner of argument againſt its divinity.—And what can that be leſs than of divine original, even " the True Goſpel of Chriſt which " provides no ſuch *ſalvo*'s for ſinners as would afford " ground of hope and comfort for wicked men; but " on the contrary, it requires and obliges men to be- " come perſonally valuable in themſelves, to be- " come worthy of, and to be the proper objects of " divine regard; and declares men's perſonal valu- " ableneſs to be the only, and the ſole ground of " their acceptance with God." *—Do not then let us imagine this Goſpel *unworthy* of a divine original.

AGAIN, ſhould we attend to the *want of the ſpread* of the Goſpel, the plaineſt reaſons may be aſſigned: and yet, none owing to the revelation as being unworthy the reception of mankind.

MR. *Chubb* can account well for the ſpread of *Mahometaniſm*. "—This was owing, *ſays he*, to " Chriſtianity becoming corrupted in that grand " principle of all true religion, whether natural or " revealed, *viz.* the *unity of God*; and this not on- " ly became a bar to men's receiving it, but it gave " occaſion for that great defection from it which " has ſo far and ſo long prevailed in the world, " commonly called, *Mahometaniſm*." *True Goſpel*, p. 138.

AND to a like ſource may we attribute the low reputation Chriſtianity is in, at this day, in many parts of the world: *i. e.* where it has been repreſented in the *Romiſh habit*. Than which, it could not have ſuffered a greater *tranſmutation*. Who? I aſk who, that ſincerely loves the *truth*, as it is in Jeſus, could wiſh the ſpread of Chriſtianity in the dreſs of Popery! better, ten thouſand times better, the darkneſs of Paganiſm, than this monſtrous production! which renders *inhumane* yea *deviliſh* all that form their temper and actions upon its principles. This has been the *fertile* Mother of all abſurd, and irra-

* True Goſpel *p.* 126,

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tional, enthuſiaſtical and cruel principles; *maxims*, provoking to the INFINITE REASON, diſhonourable to JESUS, and a vile debaſement of humane nature. How long, O God, how long, ſhall this *mother of harlots* bewitch and infatuate the earth with her *ſorceries!*

AGAIN, let us but conſider how it is that many of thoſe behave, who are privileged with this divine revelation *in its purity!* how impure, and uncharitable their tempers! how intemperate, unrighteous, and unchaſte their actions!—And then compare with this the idea of the revelation, as a *Talent or Prize* put into men's hands! It will ſhew how unworthy men are of having the revelation made *univerſal!* Oh! how great is the weight of guilt?—It will be *more tolerable* for heathen nations in the day of judgment, than for thoſe people who ſo abuſe and pervert this divine privilege. This is the very language of the *Revelation* itſelf. And the threatnings of the removal of this candleſtick, were made good among the *Aſiatic* Churches, as Mr. *Chubb* has obſerved from the ſpread of the *Mahometan* deluſion.

SHOULD any here object, *that if the Talent is capable of ſo much abuſe as to aggravate the guilt and inhance the puniſhment of men, it would ſeem an act of kindneſs not to put ſuch a Talent at all into the hands of men: for, that the ſpread of it, is, upon the whole, rather a* curſe *than a* bleſſing *to mankind?*—

I SHOULD be inclined thus to anſwer them; That the objection would indeed be of force, was there any thing in the *revelation* itſelf that had a *malevolent* tendency, or if any hurtful conſequences could be fairly drawn from the principles which it recommends. But when, *on the contrary*, it appears to have the moſt benign and friendly aſpect on ſociety; inculcating ſentiments of obligation, every way worthy reaſonable nature, and adapted to dignify and exalt it! principles well adapted to render its true diſciples the greateſt bleſſings to the world! This will

raiſe our Ideas of the *Favour* of God, in making ſuch a revelation; and render it the matter of our moſt earneſt deſires, that it might be *univerſally* known in the humane family. For, notwithſtanding men are capable of abuſing and corrupting this pure ſcheme of *truth* and *benevolence*, yet thoſe their abuſes do not *at all* alter the value of the revelation. They depreciate it no more, than men's being enabled by the *light of the ſun* to commit thoſe enormous vices which they could not commit without it, does depreciate the bleſſing which the ſun is of to our world; or, than this proves the ſun *leſs* a bleſſing to mankind, on account of the innumerable evils it affords men light to introduce. Or *again*,

WILL any ſay, that becauſe God's *tender mercies* are ſo univerſally abuſed by the children of men, that therefore, it would have been better, upon the whole, that they had not been *over all his works!*—Since then there is nothing in the nature of the revelation itſelf, but what is worthy of *all acceptation*, every wiſe and good man would wiſh its ſpread, though at the ſame time he may have the moſt melancholy views of the unworthy behaviour of thoſe who already have it, in its purity! And foraſmuch as it is calculated to bleſs mankind, their perverting the deſign of it, or neglecting its intention, and ſo inhancing their guilt, will no way depreciate the *excellency* of the talent.

WE ſhould, from the objection, be even unable to vindicate God's *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* in giving ſuch a creature as *man* a being; who is endowed with reaſonable powers and faculties, capable either of *great improvement*, or of inconceivably great *perverſion* and *abuſe*; in the laſt of which caſes, his obnoxiouſneſs to evil ariſes in proportion.—

BUT on the other hand, as the *beſt* things ſeem capable of the *greateſt* abuſe, ſo the horrid corruptions and depravations of pure Chriſtianity can be no arguments of its want of excellency.

MR.

MR. *Chubb* has given us a very rational account of the Goſpel's not being *univerſally received* at its firſt publication.* I ſhall chuſe to tranſcribe one paragraph from him.

" AND ſurely if every reader would but conſider " how many *difficulties* it had to encounter with, and " how many kinds of *oppoſition* were likely to be " made to it, he would not be ſurprized to find that " it made no greater progreſs than it did. For as " the Goſpel of Chriſt is an addreſs to men as *free* " beings, which have the direction of their own " actions, and as ſuch it muſt be left to every man's " *choice*, whether he would *hear*, or whether he " would *forbear*; whether he would *attend* to it, or " ſet his *face* againſt it: ſo conſequently it could not " be *forced* upon the world, but muſt make its way " by mere dint of *reaſon* and ſtrength of *argument*. " Indeed the *miraculous* power which attended the " Goſpel at its firſt publication, was deſigned to " *alarm* the world, and to call in men's ſerious *at-* " *tention* to what was kindly offered to them, *and to* " *ſtamp a* DIVINE *character upon it*; and upon ma- " ny it had its intended effect. But then with mul- " titudes of others the caſe was otherwiſe; men " found out ways to take off the *force* of this alarm, " by aſcribing that power to *other cauſes*, and the " like; ſo that the generality of men were ſo far " from being brought over to the Goſpel of Chriſt, " that on the contrary, they made *great oppoſition* to " it—*p.* 122, 123." the grounds of which he afterwards particularly conſiders.

IT will then be proper to put this queſtion, Whether a divine revelation *could* be made *univerſal?* And it is plain, from what Mr. *Chubb* has ſaid, from the make of man, from the circumſtances of the world, as well as from the nature of the thing, that a divine revelation, atteſted by miracles, *could not be univerſal.* And not only ſo, but the miſſion of Jeſus, as a *man*

* See his True Goſpel, from *p.* 122 to 139.

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ſent of God, who taught the moſt excellent doctrine, and died in atteſtation of it, in order to reform and ſave men's ſouls, this does not ſeem to admit of being made univerſal, *i. e. by a divine application made immediately to the mind of every individual of our ſpecies.*—But the *credibility* of the divine miſſion of Jeſus, appears to be the reſult of conſummate *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*, *ſkill* and *prudence*, in which they have ſeemed to *abound*.—Let then any man ſhew, how the divine *deſignation* of Jeſus, to be the *ſole judge* of men, could have been better made known and atteſted than it is; and then, it will be time to ſuffer our uneaſy ſcruples to ariſe about the *credibility* of it, but I think not before.

HENCE we may reply to Mr. *Chubb*'s queſtion with great clearneſs; ſince the *want of the univerſality* attending the making of a divine revelation, is ſo far from leſſening the credibility of it, or being an objection of *leſs*, or *more*, or *ſuperior* weight to all other circumſtances in its favour; that it is itſelf a circumſtance that muſt *unavoidably* attend a divine revelation.

AND to aſſert that miracles at fartheſt ariſe to a *low degree* of probability will appear a groundleſs aſſertion, if we are allowed to argue from *analogy*, as Mr. *Chubb* has done.

GOD would not ſend a perſon in his own name, as authorized by him to be the judge of quick and dead, and not vouchſafe ſuch teſtimonials of power and wiſdom that would demonſtrate his being inveſted with ſuch a commiſſion. To ſuppoſe this, would be worſe than to ſuppoſe God to permit men to deceive one another; for, it would prove him defective either in wiſdom or goodneſs, or both.—But if God has imparted ſo much power as was requiſite to ſupport his miſſion and character, whom he had thus authorized, then the miracles muſt riſe above a *low probability*, as being plenary teſtimonies or ſeals of his miſſion.

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NOR ſhould this be wondered at, arguing from *analogy*; foraſmuch as the light of nature derives its evidence, concerning God, from the operations of his hands: And therefore he is ſaid, *not to leave himſelf without witneſs, in that he does good, and gives men rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs.*—Men would not be able to form any notions of God, but as they are led by his works of creation and providence: it will therefore appear requiſite, that *more particular*, or *extraordinary* revelations of his will and purpoſe, ſhould be atteſted by *external* evidence, ſuitable to the nature and deſign of ſuch revelations.—And foraſmuch as this is reported to be the caſe, there is an *high*, if not the *higheſt* degree of probability, that ſuch revelations are divine.

APPENDIX.

AS an *Appendix* to what I have offered, I would humbly recommend to the conſideration of Mr. CHUBB, and of all thoſe who may have any *vague* or *indeterminate* Ideas of miracles, thoſe *Queries* which are put by the ingenious *Dr.* GEO. TURNBULL, in his *Philoſophical Enquiry concerning the Connexion*, &c. which I beg leave to tranſcribe.

"QUERY I. Whether ſamples of a certain power, do not prove that power: Or if any thing elſe is neceſſary to prove a certain power, beſides ſamples of that power: ſamples analogous in kind, and proportioned in quantity or moment?

AND in conſequence of this, Whether ſamples of a power to raiſe the dead, do not prove a power to raiſe the dead; and whether ſamples of a power to deliver

deliver from all kind of diſeaſes and infirmities, do not prove a power to deliver from all kind of diſeaſes and infirmities; and whether ſamples of power to confer certain qualities and bleſſings, do not prove power to confer theſe qualities and bleſſings?

QUERY II. Whether the principal if not all the doctrines of CHRIST, are not aſſertions of his having power to raiſe the dead, and deliver from miſeries; and confer bleſſings; to deliver from ſuch kind of miſeries, and confer ſuch kind of bleſſings as his works were proper and natural ſamples or exexperiments of? and what ſample, or ſamples are wanting to make the evidence of his having any power he claimed by his doctrines, full and compleat?

QUERY III. Whether it is more natural and reaſonable to think, that God would controul the power of any *being* who pretended a miſſion from him, which he had not; and not ſuffer him to produce all the extraordinary works he appealed to as ſigns of the divine miſſion and approbation? Or that God would let one appeal to him for his approbation; and give all the evidences and ſigns of it, to which he appeals as proofs, without any check or controul; full ſamples of all the power and knowledge he pretended to as a divine miſſionary? Which of theſe two concluſions is moſt conſonant to our notions of order and wiſe adminiſtration; our natural conceptions of GOD; and to what we know of the divine government of the natural or moral world?

QUERY IV. Whether an uninterrupted courſe of honeſty, goodneſs, faithfulneſs, and benevolence, be not ſufficient to create truſt? and whether there was any thing in the conduct of JESUS CHRIST, that could beget diffidence and miſtruſt; or any thing wanting to put his honeſty, ſincerity, and good intention beyond all doubt?

QUERY

QUERY V. Which of the doctrines of our SAVIOUR has not a direct tendency, and powerful influence, to excite and encourage to the practice of piety and virtue; and what is wanting to render the doctrine of our SAVIOUR, a compleat ſyſtem of religion and morality, in point of precepts, motives, or means: what in point of duty, that reaſon does not demonſtrate to be a duty; what in point of motive, that it is not in itſelf probable though not certain; or what in reſpect of means that it is not fit and proper in the nature of things, to improve and promote virtue and goodneſs to the higheſt degree of perfection humane nature is capable of?

QUERY VI. Whether therefore abſtracting from the truth of Chriſtianity, a better public doctrine can be deviſed; whether mankind would live more comfortably and virtuouſly without the belief of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, and the other motives Chriſtianity furniſheth to the practice of benevolence and righteouſneſs; and conſequently, whether *it is a kind office to mankind to endeavour to weaken that belief*; or whether *it is not the part of a good member of ſociety, and an honeſt man, to conſider well before he publiſhes to the world his ſingular notions, whether the promulgating them may not have a bad effect; contribute to leſſen the regard to virtue, or at leaſt the reſtraints from vice?*

QUERY VII. Whether the works which were performed by JESUS CHRIST to evince the truth of the doctrines he taught, are not a natural, proper, and full proof of their truth in the ſtricteſt and moſt philoſophical ſenſe of a proof or evidence; ſince his works bear the ſame relation to his doctrines, as ſigns or ſamples of their truth, that any experiments in philoſophy bear to the concluſions juſtly inferred from them; or in other words, ſince, for inſtance,

they are ſigns of their truth in the ſame ſenſe that experiments or ſamples of gravity or elaſticity, are ſigns of the reality of theſe properties?

QUERY VIII. Whether that kind of proof or evidence can be ſaid to be above the reach of any one, upon whch even the loweſt and moſt ignorant of mankind daily reaſon and act in many inſtances: and whether all degrees of men do not reaſon and act every day upon the evidence or proof, which ſigns and ſamples afford of that quality, natural or moral, of which they are ſigns and ſamples?

THE evidence therefore upon which the truth of Chriſtianity depends, is at the ſame time a ſtrictly philoſophical unexceptionable evidence, and an evidence that is obvious to every capacity, nay, familiar to every one."

THE ſubſtantial ground on which theſe Queries are put, and the excellent ſenſe they contain, as demanding the regard of every honeſt, accurate, and impartial enquirer after truth, was the motive to my tranſcribing them, and when they are ſoberly diſcuſſed, and fairly ſet aſide as having no weight or importance in them, it will be time enough for me to withdraw my regard to the evidence of miracles.

FINIS.

Page 44 read Line 25 before Line 24